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NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

By

Right Rev. Jeremias Bonomelli, D.D.
BISHOP OF CREMONA

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TRANSLATED BY

RIGHT REV. THOMAS SEBASTIAN BYRNE, D.D.
BISHOP OF NASHVILLE

VOLUME I

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✠ JOHN M. FARLEY,
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Author's Preface

I FANCY a great many priests, when they first see this "New Series of Homilies," will say with a shrug of the shoulders and toss of the head: "Still another series of homilies; as if we have not enough of them already and suited to every taste. It is time lost." I know we have already many series of homilies; in fact, there is an abundance of them, and every pastor and every assistant has one or more on the shelves of his modest library. Nevertheless I feel that I shall be doing a useful work if I add still another to the many we already possess. I am well aware that it will not be better than others, but it will increase their number and will do no one any harm. It is well at a sumptuous banquet to have many dishes, and to have side by side with those that are exquisite and costly, others that are common and even coarse. The tastes of men are so numerous and so diverse that what is insipid to some may be relished by others. This "New Series of Homilies" may have the honor and the merit of supplying a food, common indeed but nutritious, and may in its own way be an aid to country pastors, who will likely find it to their taste and suited to their needs. The divine truths contained in Sacred Writ are always the same, beautiful as light and as unchangeable, but their development and their application are marvelously various, accord-

ing to time, place, person, education, habits, customs, needs, and even tastes. This is why so many books and tracts are written on the same truths, and it would be an injustice to the writers of them to say that they had done a useless work. Putting aside the fact that possibly they may have added something new to what has been said by others, it is a decided good and no despicable advantage to have the same truths expressed in other forms, as it is an agreeable thing at a meal to have the same dish differently served. The grade of intelligence in men and their manner of grasping the same truths is most varied, and hence it is desirable that these truths should be set before them in every possible form, in order that all may the more easily comprehend them.

One who sets himself to write a book upon any subject whatever, already treated of by others, does so with the persuasion, whether true or false it matters not, that he will say something new, if not as to the matter itself, at least as to the form, the disposition, and the order of the subject treated and the clearness with which it is set forth. If he has not this persuasion, he should assuredly not undertake to write. Naturally, I also have this persuasion, whether rightly or wrongly, my indulgent readers will judge. And now, what can I say in this series of homilies? I will speak out my mind frankly.

In all the courses of homilies that I have seen I have uniformly found an explanation only of the Gospel of the current Sunday. This has been the common and universal custom for some centuries back; but we know that the Fathers

of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries explained to the people in the form of homilies not only the Gospel, but also the Epistles and the other canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. Of this, Origen, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory the Great are an incontestable proof. And why should we not do the same now? It seems to me that it would be a good and a wise thing to do, if for no other reason than because this bit of novelty, if it may be so called, will excite a laudable and a profitable curiosity in the hearers, will increase their knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and give them an opportunity to enjoy its beauties. The Council of Trent lays it as a duty upon pastors, or those who hold their place, to explain *briefly* and *clearly,* every Sunday and feast-day, the *Gospel* or *some part of what is read in the Holy Mass.* The pastor is therefore free to explain in the homily to the people either the Gospel or the Epistle, or some other part of the Mass.

Sustained by so great an authority, I have thought that I shall do a good and an acceptable work if in my "Series" I add to the homily on the Gospel one on the Epistle of the current Sunday. The fifty-two Sundays of the year will give fifty-two homilies on the Gospel and fifty-two on the Epistles, or one hundred and four in all; and since the year is divided liturgically into four seasons, I have distributed these hundred and four homilies into four volumes, each containing twenty-six.

Conformably to the ecclesiastical year, I have begun with Advent, and in this first volume I am

happy to present to my kind and benevolent readers the first twenty-six homilies, commencing with the first Sunday of Advent and ending with Quinquagesima Sunday. This is the first novelty of my "Series of Homilies," but there is another and possibly a more important one.

The homilies of the Fathers were commentaries on the Sacred Text, more or less literal, according to the taste of the age, but still always commentaries. In our day the homily is no longer a commentary on the Gospel; it furnishes an occasion for a sermon or a preachment. After reading the Gospel the pastor or assistant selects from it according to his fancy a verse or thought, which he develops in the form, not of a homily, but of a discourse. It seems to me that this method, which I do not deny has its advantages, is not in accordance with the example of the Fathers, nor with the character of a homily, nor, I will venture to add, with the spirit of the Church, which requires that the Gospel, or some passage read in the Mass, shall be explained to the people. In my "Series of Homilies" I have thought it well to give at the beginning of each homily a faithful version of the Gospel and Epistle, and then to take up each and explain it verse by verse. This method, it is true, will give no scope for eloquence, but, what is much better, it will give an opportunity for explanation and it will be instructive.

In explaining the books of Scripture we should make every endeavor to ascertain the true and precise sense which the Holy Ghost intends to convey to us, for this and this alone is the word of God. Other senses, which may be derived from

passages of the Bible, we respect and receive with reverence, but our duty and our chief and direct aim should be to get at the true and literal sense, since only then are we really giving an explanation of the Sacred Scriptures. But, as a rule, what is done by those who profess to explain Sacred Scripture in a homily? They collect together at random certain moral truths, which they derive from the Sacred Text as they might from any profane author, and having done this much they are content. They will certainly have stated many truths, excellent if you will, but they are not the truths taught in the Gospel and in the Epistle by Jesus Christ and the apostles, and these above all are the truths we should seek to find.

The homilies, however, which I have the honor of setting before you, will, I am confident, have this merit, that they will be an elucidation of the true and literal text of the Gospel and Epistles. It is hardly necessary to say that I shall strive as best I can to make the moral applications, so necessary for the people, and they will be solidly grounded on the literal sense of the text. I shall say nothing or very little of the mystical sense, for the reason that an occasion to do so will rarely present itself, and if it should it is not always easy to make the sense clear or to deduce from it any profitable lesson.

I shall also be very sparing in quoting the Fathers, because this is a luxury of the erudite, as easy to avail oneself of as it is trying to an audience, especially if their words are quoted at length. Still I wish to state most explicitly that there will not be a single sentence of Scripture

elucidated by me in the course of the homilies that will not conform entirely to the sense of the Fathers, although I do not cite their words, which, after all, would be an easy matter.

I had intended to include in this Preface certain canons for the right interpretation of Sacred Scripture; canons which I have myself faithfully followed; and it may be they would be read with pleasure and profit, especially by those, and they are many, who have not had the time, or inclination, or opportunity to give themselves to the study of Biblical hermeneutics; but when I had set to work to collect and arrange my matter, I perceived that if I carried out my purpose, this Preface would be no longer a preface, but a considerable part of a volume, and I therefore abandoned the idea. At the end of the first volume, I shall give in an appendix those hermeneutical canons, and they will be at once plain and serviceable, and also a vocabulary of the most important Biblical names and terms occuring in the text. I have also an idea, if God spares my life and gives me health, to write other volumes of homilies. In the first volumes I propose to give homilies on the Gospels and Epistles of the Masses known as *De Commune,* which are hardly ever explained to the people; in the next volumes I propose to treat of the mysteries of Our Lord, devoting to each five or six discourses; in a third series I shall give homilies or discourses on the feasts of the Blessed Virgin that occur during the course of the year. Such is the plan of my work, a long work but a valuable one, because I am not without hope that it may be productive of good.

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NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

First Sunday of Advent

HOMILY I

BRETHREN: Knowing the season, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* xiii. 11-14.

MY FRIENDS, these five verses, the last of the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul to the Romans, are read in the Holy Mass of this Sunday.

This is the first of the four Sundays of Advent, or of that holy season when the Church, like a loving mother, is wholly intent upon disposing her children for the coming of Our Lord and for His holy birth. Holy Church transports us in spirit into that period of time that intervened between Adam and the birth of Christ, and making the language of patriarchs and prophets her own, she is sad and sorrowful, as a bride awaiting the bridegroom and bemoaning his delay, and with prayers and fastings, with abstinence and weep-

ing, with eager yearnings and passionate longings she cries out to Him and implores Him to hasten His coming.[1] None knows human nature better than the Church, and she knows that external objects must be fitted to the internal feelings of the soul. Now, must not Holy Church, in transporting herself during this season of Advent into those centuries that passed before the coming of Christ, necessarily have in her heart those same feelings with which the minds of patriarchs and prophets and of the just were so full? What should those feelings be? They should be feelings of profound sadness and sorrow, mingled with a tranquil resignation; and hence she orders that the organ shall be hushed, that hymns and canticles of joy shall cease, that the altar shall be stripped of flowers, that her churches and her priests shall be clad in mourning, and that the faithful shall fast and abstain. What must have been the feelings of patriarchs and prophets and of the just while anxiously awaiting the coming of the promised Messias? They must have been feelings of living faith, of ardent hope, of humility and prayer. And hence Holy Church puts upon the lips of her priests the words of the prophets

[1]We commonly say that the Church began with Jesus Christ and the apostles; but it would be more exact to say that the Church began with Adam and was perfected or completed by Jesus Christ and the apostles. For what is the whole revelation made through Moses and the patriarchs but a preparation for and an introduction to the Church? The Church began with Adam and will continue to exist as long as there is a Christian left on earth. She embraces all time, and both she and the ancient synagogue were animated by the same spirit of Christ, and only through Him were they saved who lived before Him, as only through Him have they been saved who have lived since His coming, because He alone is the life of whose fulness we have all received.

and cries out through them: "Come, come, O Lord; delay no longer, loose our fetters, free us from our sins; send the Lamb who will rule the earth."

It would not be easy to find in all the Letters of St. Paul a passage which better than the one given above expresses the spirit with which the Church wishes her children to be inspired and which could more efficaciously prepare them profitably to celebrate the mystery of the birth of Christ.

I shall now set myself briefly to explain these admirable words of the Apostle and I trust you will listen well to what is said and store it in your memory.

"*It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep,*" says the Apostle. What sleep is here meant, my friends? There is a sleep of the body and a sleep of the soul.[1] In the physical sleep or sleep of the body man remains inert; he has eyes and sees not, ears and hears not; neither does he speak with his tongue, nor walk with his feet, nor toil with his hands; and this sleep within proper limits is as necessary as is food to restore the energies of the body. There is also a sleep of the soul, but this is most frequently a guilty sleep. And when, my friends, is this sleep of the soul culpable? When the soul never thinks of God, or very rarely; never thinks of its last end or of its salvation; when, wholly given over to the affairs of the world, it forgets prayer and its other religious duties. Then it abandons itself wholly to

[1]Est somnus animae et est somnus corporis: somnum corporis habere debemus, alias deficit homo. Malus est animae somnus. Somnus animae est oblivisci Deum suum.—Aug. in Ps. lxii.

a culpable sleep, which is the forerunner of its eternal death. If I cast my eyes about me, up and down, what do I see? Alas, how many souls are asleep while their bodies are feverishly toiling. They rarely or never listen to the word of God, they take no account of the sacraments, of the laws of the Church or even of the divine law. In vain the grace of God passes, like a divine breath, over their souls; like a ray of light it beats upon their eyes to rouse them and start them upon the way of life, but they are buried in sleep. To such souls I cry out with the great apostle: Arise, now is the hour to awake, to look to yourselves, to open your eyes to the light of truth, to shake off the dust of this world and to set out on the way that leads to heaven.

It is all the more necessary to awaken from this spiritual slumber, the Apostle goes on to say, because your salvation is nearer than you believed. What does this mean, my friends? There was a time, St. Paul seems to say, when we, the children of Moses and the disciples of the prophets, looked forward to the coming of the promised Messias; but now He has come, we have seen Him with our own eyes; I have preached Him to you and you have believed in Him; salvation is now nearer, and if our negligence was culpable before the coming of Jesus Christ, it will be doubly culpable, now that we live in the light of His faith and are nearer to the promised reward.[1]

[1]This Letter of St. Paul was written to the faithful of the Church at Rome, composed partly of Hebrews and partly of converted Gentiles, as is clear from the whole Letter, and he addresses indifferently both one and the other.

And, my dear friends, are not the words of the Apostle strictly true in our case also? Thanks be to God, we have had for years and years the inestimable gift of faith in Jesus Christ and we have walked according to its light. From the day we were able to know and appreciate this great gift down to the present, how many years have gone by? And from that day we have approached nearer and nearer to the end of our lives, and therefore we are daily drawing nearer to that moment in which our salvation will be accomplished and we shall see and possess Jesus Christ. That moment is near at hand; it may be to-morrow or to-day and there is no time to be lost. If we are sleeping that dangerous sleep of the soul, of which St. Paul speaks, let us awake at once. "Arise, thou who sleepest," cries the Apostle, "and Christ will give thee light."

"*The night is past and the day is at hand.*" What night is this and what day, of which the Apostle speaks? It is the dark night of paganism in which the converted Romans had so long wandered; it is the night that had been illuminated by the dawn of the prophets; the night in which the Hebrews, then become Christians, had lived, saluting from afar the longed-for Saviour: the day, that is near at hand, aye present, is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. The night that is far advanced may also mean the world, or the present life, so full of error, so harassed by trial and passion; and the day that is at hand may mean the everlasting day, the day of that blessed life for which we are all earnestly yearning.

Here St. Paul, still continuing the beautiful figure of day and night, lifts his thoughts on high to the truths of faith and in language full of strength and virile eloquence exclaims: "*Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.*" We have come out from the night of paganism; we have left behind us the shadows of the Mosaic law; let us walk in the light of the doctrine brought on earth by Christ; let us pass boldly through this perverse world; we are already near the day when we shall see God face to face; away, then, with the works of darkness, the works of paganism, the works of the Mosaic law, the works of this world in which we live; and let us put on the armor of light, the works of faith and the works of Jesus Christ Himself. Here armor, as is clear from its connection with the preceding clause, signifies *works*.

Why does St. Paul call good works an armor of light? Because good works are the arms by which we defend ourselves against the enemy when he attacks us; and because as arms are an ornament to him who bears them, so are good works an ornament and a glory to him who does them. St. Paul here certainly means by the works of night or of darkness, wicked and sinful works; and by the works of day or of light, good and holy works. And why so? The inspired writings, accommodating themselves to our nature, lead us on to a knowledge of invisible and spiritual things by means of the visible and material; in the visible and material order, not only is light the most beautiful of all things, but it gives an added beauty and grace to everything that is beautiful

and gracious, and where light does not shine there is no beauty and all is ugliness and deformity. And hence in Scripture language beautiful and holy works are called the works of light, and wicked works are called the works of darkness. According to our way of thinking there is the same relation between light and virtue that there is between vice and darkness; and hence virtue loves light and flees darkness, whereas vice hates the light and seeks darkness and hides itself within it. *"The murderer riseth at the very break of day, he killeth the needy and the poor man, but in the night he will be as a thief. The eye of the adulterer observeth darkness, saying: No eye shall see me, and he will cover his face. He diggeth through the houses in the dark, as in the day they had appointed for themselves . . . and the morning is to them the shadow of death."*[1] Darkness and crime are allies; night and sin are friends, because night banishes shame and takes away fear. St. Paul properly brands wicked deeds as the works of darkness, saying: *"Let us cast off the works of darkness;"* and he bids us do the works of light; *"Put on the armor of light."*

The great apostle goes on, still using the image of light and darkness: *"Let us walk honestly as in the day."* If at midday you should walk through the most frequented streets of the city, certain that all would observe you, what would you do? You would assuredly be careful to walk with dignity and suitable gravity, to have your clothes clean and becoming; and you would scrupulously avoid whatever might expose you to un-

[1] Job xxiv. 14-17.

favorable comment or to the derision of the passersby. Very well, St. Paul says: "Christians, walk in the sight of men, and, what is more important still, in the sight of God, and in the full light of day; do nothing, either in word or deed, that may be unworthy of you; let your whole external conduct be dignified and becoming, so that no one can point the finger of reproach at you. As you have the light of faith, so also do the works of faith." "Children of light," the Apostle says in another place, "walk, that is, do works that become the children of light." It is a phrase full of dignity and strength, of poetry and luminous meaning: "*Walk as the children of light.*" You have nothing to hide, because you have nothing to be ashamed of; let every one see your works and let them glorify your Father for whom they are done; glorify God who is *the Light* and in whom there is no darkness.

And here, my friends, I beg you to consider the exquisite art with which the Apostle has expressed and arranged these few phrases. He speaks of sleep, of night, and of the works of darkness; of the necessity of waking up, of day, of light, and of the works of light. You will readily see that these expressions—sleep, night, and the works of darkness, and again, the necessity of waking up, the idea of day, of light, and of the works of light —are so closely interwoven that they coalesce and form but one thought; and hence, when the Apostle condemns the sleep of the soul and night, he at the same time condemns the works of darkness or wicked deeds; and, on the contrary, when he admonishes us to bestir ourselves and to wake up, and goes on to speak of the day and of light, and

warns us to walk as in the day, he clearly exhorts us to the practice of good and righteous deeds, such as become a Christian. Hence the entire teaching of these five verses may be summarized in these two phrases: Shun evil, do good.

And which precisely are the evil works which we should shun and the good works which we should do? The Apostle tells us at once. *"Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences."* Of course, as you will understand, it was not the intention of the Apostle that the few disorders he here enumerates should comprise all the evil deeds or works of darkness against which a Christian should especially be on his guard; he wished only to call to mind those which seemed at once the most heinous and the most common, and to which, I think, he knew the Christians to whom he was writing were most addicted. Excess in eating and drinking, incontinence and sins of the flesh, quarreling and strife, hatred and envy, and whatever wounds and destroys brotherly love, are works of darkness and should not even be named among Christians.

The Apostle is truly admirable in his Letters. Now he treats of the most sublime doctrines, drawing aside the hem of the veil of faith, and with a few rapid touches reveals to us the blinding light in which they are enshrined; and then he suddenly comes down into the vast field of practical life and in a few short sentences condenses the most important moral truths and sets them

before us in words full of life and energy. So also here he cries out against rioting and drunkenness, against impurity, contention, and envy. which are the most common vices and against which he warns the faithful.

My friends, let us take a look at this parish; let each family examine its history and life, and let each individual do the same. Are we clean of the deeds of shame enumerated by St. Paul? Have we not indulged in the vice of intemperance and gluttony? Have we not yielded to the wicked suggestions of sense and to the desires of the flesh? Have we not by word and wish and deed severed the bonds of fraternal charity and sown the seeds of strife? If unhappily such has been the case, we are not of the number of those who walk in the light, who walk honestly as in the day; but rather are we of those who seek the cover of darkness to hide their shame. What, then, should we do? End at once and forever these works of darkness; *"put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences."*

And do you know what is meant by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ? This is a strong and sublime phrase often found in St. Paul's Letters and the meaning of which should be well understood.

Jesus Christ is our Head and supreme Teacher; He is the sovereignly perfect pattern of every virtue; the whole desire of a Christian, if he understands himself, should be to copy Jesus Christ into his life, so that he can say: *"I am another Christ."*[1]

[1]This is the definition given by Tertullian of a real Christian: *Christianus est alter Christus.*

A Christian should in word and thought, in affection and action, in his inner and outer life, so copy Jesus Christ into himself, as to be a living and faithful portrait of Him; and just as our body is covered and adorned with raiment, so should our soul, and in a sense our body also, be covered and adorned with the works of Jesus Christ. This is what is meant by *"putting on the Lord Jesus Christ."*

The Apostle concludes with these words: *"Make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences;"* that is, do not caress the flesh by yielding to its sinful cravings. In these words St. Paul emphasizes a fundamental Christian truth, of which we have already spoken, namely, that we must at all times and with all our strength make war on those passions which lie latent in our flesh and blood, and which through the seductions of pleasure lead us on to eternal perdition.

My friends, whenever I read these last sentences of St. Paul which I have just explained, one of the most extraordinary and touching facts recorded in ecclesiastical history comes spontaneously to my mind. It is vividly portrayed and eloquently and feelingly described by him who was the subject of it. It is as follows:

In the second half of the fourth century there lived a young man of noble sentiments and magnanimous heart; possibly the world has never seen a more acute and a greater intellect than his. Leaving the home of his mother he went from Carthage to Rome and from Rome to Milan in pursuit of knowledge. He gave himself up to the

gratification of the most ignoble passions; he spurned the Faith that he had drunk in as an infant in the arms of a saintly mother who worshiped him and followed him wherever he went, and he became a heretic and a skeptic. The first ray of light dawned upon this generous soul, thirsting for truth and a slave to error and the sins of the flesh, while reading the works of Cicero and Plato and listening to words full of love spoken by a holy bishop. Little by little he came to know the truth, the whole truth, as only he, an eagle among intellects, could know it; but the miserable man could not break the chain with which his passions had him bound; he wished to go back to God, but he was powerless; he wept and lamented, but all to no purpose. I think it would be difficult to find pages truer or more eloquent than those in which this impetuous young man of thirty describes the trials, the bitterness, the conflicts, the struggles, the sorrows, and the unspeakable distress of his soul; and none knew better than he how to write the story of the human heart or to penetrate into the deepest recesses of the spirit and reveal its workings. One can not read those pages without grieving and weeping with him who wrote them. One day, unable longer to stifle the cry of his conscience, which tormented him, or to break with his passions, which enslaved him, he rose hastily and quitting the friends by whom he was surrounded rushed from the room, and going into the adjoining garden threw himself at the base of a tree and covering his face with his hands burst into tears. "I wept bitterly," he says, "over my shameful excesses and yet I could not

make up my mind to give them up." Just then he heard a voice, as of a child, coming from a nearby house, and saying over and over again: "Take and read—Take and read." He listened, rose to his feet, wiped away his tears, entered the room he had just left, seized the first book that came to hand, opened it at hazard, and read the first words upon which his eyes fell. The book was the Epistles of St. Paul and the words were these: "Not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and impurities; not in contention and envy; put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." Having finished reading he closed the book; a ray of serene and tranquil light illuminated his mind; the tempest in his heart was stilled; his doubts disappeared; a new strength came into his whole being; an inexpressible sweetness filled his soul; and instantly he felt himself changed into another man; the disbelieving young man was wholly transformed and converted; the simple words of St. Paul, which we have explained and together meditated upon, had wrought a stupendous miracle. Would you know who that young man was, who, being an unbeliever and a slave to passion and lust, was in an instant transformed into a believer and a saint? He was the son of St. Monica, the great Augustine.[1]

Marvelous is the power of the Word of God and His grace on the one hand, and of the will of man on the other.

[1]Confessions, bk. x. This is a masterpiece both as a scientific and as a literary production.

HOMILY II

AT THAT time Jesus said to His disciples: There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world; for the powers of heaven shall be moved; and then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. And He spoke to them a similitude: See the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh. So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but My words shall not pass away.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xxi. 25-33.

THIS is the Gospel for the first Sunday of Advent. Hearing these words falling from the lips of Jesus Christ you would assuredly say that they had reference to the end of time, to the Last Judgment, with which the drama of this world will close and when every one will receive according to his works. You may be surprised that at this season the Church directs our thoughts to the second coming of Jesus Christ, when it should seem

we ought to be preparing for His first coming; that she speaks to us of the majesty of the coming of the Supreme Judge, when we ought to be thinking of the extreme poverty and the unspeakable humiliations of the divine Babe. Yet, my friends, nothing is more fitting.

The thought of the Last Judgment should fill us with a salutary fear, lead us to enter into our consciences, to examine them diligently, and to cast out sin from them, if unfortunately they are conscious of its presence. And is not this the best possible way to prepare ourselves to celebrate holily the first coming of Christ?

Again, the first coming of Jesus Christ, so humble and to all appearance so despicable, may be for many a rock of scandal; the grandeur and the majesty of His second coming, as Judge of the living and the dead, will remove this scandal and will make us recognize in the Babe, whom in a few days we shall adore on His bed of straw, the Man-God and the Son of the Eternal and the Almighty. But we must comment on the words of the Gospel just read.

"Jesus said to His disciples: There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved."

Properly to understand these words it is necessary to go back a little and learn the occasion that suggested them and the circumstances in which they were uttered.

The days when Jesus Christ was to accomplish His passion were near at hand, or rather it was the vigil of His passion, since these words were spoken the Monday or Tuesday before His death. As He had referred to the destruction of the Temple and to the judgment to come, the apostles said to Him: "Tell us when will these things take place," namely, the destruction of the Temple and of the city. "And what will be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world?"[1] The apostles put two questions to Jesus and He replied separately to each. He spoke first of the destruction of the Temple and the ruin of the city, and then went on to His second coming and the signs that would precede it. Three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, give more or less at length the words of Our Lord. The Church in the Gospel of this Sunday gives us the answer which Jesus Christ made to the apostles concerning the Last Judgment and the signs which should usher it in.

Before beginning the explanation of the Gospel allow me to make a remark which may be useful.

There have been, and there are still, those who curiously inquire as to when the end of the world will come. Such inquiries are useless and dangerous, and the Church forbids us to make forecasts as to the time when this will take place. Jesus Christ Himself said that no one knows that day, not even the angels, and, He added, "neither does the Son of man, who is speaking to you." Certainly Jesus Christ knew the day, since He

[1]Matt. xxiv. 3.

designated the signs of its approach; but He wished His hearers to understand that He did not know it as man, and that, if He did know it, He could not and would not reveal it.

However, if I may express an opinion, it seems clear to me that the end of the world is very far off. If God took more than forty centuries to prepare for the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ or the Church, it seems to me reasonable that this kingdom should last much longer than that. Of the fifteen hundred million men who live on the earth, not three hundred millions have entered into the Church; and is it credible that so small a number of men should be the fruit of so lavish a redemption? Jesus Christ is and must be the King of the universe; His kingdom should be not only universal, but in a certain sense pacific; and we are still very far from the realization of this universal and pacific kingdom of Jesus Christ; and moreover the children of Israel, who before the end of the world must return to Jesus Christ, have to this day shown themselves to be obstinate in their unbelief. I may, then, say with St. Paul, let none of us be troubled "as if the day of the Lord were at hand."[1] In all likelihood some decades of centuries will yet go by before the dawning of that great day. And now having said this much we shall go on to explain the Gospel.

Jesus Christ speaks of the fearful signs that will precede the Day of Judgment; of signs in the

[1] "We beseech you, brethren . . . that you be not easily moved from your sense, nor be terrified . . . as if the day of the Lord were at hand" (2 *Thess.* ii. 1, 2).

sun, in the moon, in the stars, and on the sea. What shall these signs be? Jesus Christ does not go into particulars, but He gives us clearly to understand that they will be terrifying beyond all power of words to express. It is well to remember that the prophets, when they foretell great misfortunes or startling events, use these same strong and emphatic forms of expression, so familiar to the Oriental mind. Thus the prophet Joel in foretelling the miracle of Pentecost and the establishment of the Church, uses these words: "*In the last days . . . I shall show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood.*"[1] Now we know that on the day of Pentecost there were no columns of smoke, nor was the sun darkened, nor the moon turned into blood. This language was used simply to give an idea of the stupendous events of Pentecost; it was a form of speech such as we sometimes employ to express what is startling or unusual, as when we say the earth trembled, the heavens seemed to fall, and the like. Our Saviour employs similar language in speaking of the final catastrophe; and it may be that in using a form of speech common to the Hebrews and accommodating Himself to their usage, He did not intend to say in the strict sense that the sun and the moon would be darkened, or that the stars would wander out of their courses, or that the sea would be violently upheaved; but only to point out in a general way, without going into particulars, the extraordinary

[1] Acts ii. 19-20.

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and fear-inspiring phenomena which would take place at that time. Still there is no doubt that the heavens and the earth will by the most formidable phenomena and events announce and usher in that great day, which will be pre-eminently the Day of the Lord.

And why should there be so tremendous a display of the forces of nature? To show forth the greatness of Him who is to come and the majesty of the Last Judgment, and, as I believe, to frighten the sinners who will then be living on the earth, and to obtain their conversion. Yes, those dreadful quakings of the earth, those disturbances in the atmosphere and in the heavens, those inrushings of the sea upon the land, those alarming phenomena, filling all peoples with dread and dismay, will be as the voice of God calling them to repentance, and, I have no doubt, many will be converted in that supreme hour. The chastisements of God upon the earth have ever been and will continue to be until the end of time the witnesses of His mercy to man.

And what will happen to men then living? "*They will wither away with fear and expectation of what shall come upon the world.*" They will wither away from fear, that is, they will be seized with an agony of terror and dismay and they will be as men dead at the sight of the universal dissolution of all things and at the coming of the divine Judge. We, my friends, shall not see that fearful day, we shall not witness that awful catastrophe; because we shall be sleeping in the tomb, or rather reduced to the dust from which we came; but our souls, wherever they are, will be conscious

of it, and if saved, they will feel secure, but if unfortunately lost, they will be stricken with terror. We have the privilege now of reading in Sacred Scripture and of hearing in advance what will happen upon the earth before the general judgment; let us then reap profit from it, let us rouse ourselves from the sleep of sin, let us judge ourselves now, as the Apostle bids us, and we shall not be judged then, nor shall we dread the horrors of that day. And it is doubtless for this reason that Jesus Christ wished to foretell and briefly describe the sorrowful events that will usher in the supreme judgment; He wishes us to fear it now, that we may escape its terrors then.

Having rapidly touched upon the commotions in the heavens and upon the earth which will precede the end of all things, and upon the terror with which all men will be filled and fade away, Jesus Christ goes on to speak of that which will be of all terrors the greatest, namely, the appearance of the divine Judge. The Son of God in His first coming, so humble and so lowly, sent before Him the patriarchs and prophets, and especially John Baptist, to prepare the way before Him by prayer and exhortation, and He appeared upon the earth at midnight, and, as St. Ignatius Martyr says, unknown to all and in the most profound silence; but in His second coming He will appear in all the majesty that belongs to Him as the Son of the eternal God. The earth will tremble and reel at His passing; He will not beseech, He will command; at His side will walk not mercy, but justice; He will come as a Judge and not as a Saviour; and the unrivaled splendor of this second coming

will be but a just compensation for the lowliness of His first.

Therefore does the Evangelist say: "*Then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty.*" As in the great demonstrations of this world the king comes last and all eyes are fixed on him, so in this sublime spectacle Jesus Christ, the King of earth and heaven, will be seen coming last after the multitudes of angels and saints. The Son of man, the man by excellence, the Man-God, will come in a *cloud*. The language is picturesque to signify His power and greatness and to show that He is above all creatures and superior to men and angels. Still it should not be thought that He will really sit upon a cloud or that He needs any such adventitious support or any material aid to give an added majesty to His adorable person. Such language is used for the benefit of us poor creatures of sense, because without figurative language we could not rise above our material surroundings and realize to ourselves somewhat of His divine greatness. It is a matter worthy of note that all the great manifestations of God have been made through clouds: God spoke to Moses from a cloud; a cloud filled the Temple of Solomon; a cloud appeared above Jesus on Thabor, and a cloud received Him out of the sight of the apostles when He went up to heaven, and it is clear that in all these instances visible clouds are meant.

In that most solemn judgment Jesus Christ will have no need of a throne, or of questions, or of answers, or of books, or even of time; all will be done in a lightning's flash, in the twinkling of an

eye, as St. Paul says; the consciences of all will be laid bare in the infinite light of His presence and each will receive according to his due, as I shall have occasion elsewhere to explain more fully.

Here Our Lord, turning to His beloved apostles and disciples, addresses them as if they were present at the general judgment, as, in fact, they will be, saying: *"When these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads;"* that is, rejoice and be glad. Others will be frightened and tremble, awaiting the irrevocable sentence, but you will not be dismayed; confidently you will lift up your eyes and gaze upon the sovereign Judge. And why? *"Because your redemption will be at hand."* But how is this, O Lord? Was not their redemption wrought out while they lived on this earth? Yes, here the seed is sown, there the harvest is reaped; in the days of this mortal life grace is given, in the Last Judgment grace will flower and bear fruit and give eternal glory. Until that day the soul, if just, will be happy with God; but the body will lie in the grave, or will be reduced to dust and decomposed into its constituent elements. At the very instant at which the supreme Judge appears, all the bodies of the dead will rise and be united to their souls, and thus will be completed the work of their sanctification or redemption, for the soul alone is not the whole man, and he will be perfect only then, when he will have again his body remade and glorious.

Jesus Christ had said explicitly what signs would go before the dawning of the last day; but he went further and drove home this truth with a

similitude, which, according to His wont, He took from the common things of life that lay under the eyes of all. As we have said, Jesus Christ spoke these words shortly before the Pasch, in the month of March and in Palestine; during that month the earth is covered with leaves and flowers, and I believe that while Jesus was speaking to the apostles, He was looking upon the green trees, and among them the fig-tree and hence he said: "*The fig-tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that the summer is nigh.*" It was as if He said: "When you see the buds swell and the trees put forth their tender leaves, you can safely say: The summer is here; so also, when you see the signs which I have enumerated, you can confidently say: The judgment is at hand."

But you will say: None of those who listened to Jesus Christ could possibly see those signs; why then did He speak thus to them? Because He spoke by them and through them to all future believers, as He has done in many other places in the Gospels.[1]

The Gospel closes with these two sentences: "*Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and*

[1] A distinguished professor of Sacred Exegetics holds that the *kingdom of God* (v. 31) is not the eternal life that will follow the Judgment, but the establishment of the Church on earth, completed by the apostles. The interpretation is ingenious, and would solve many difficulties, notably that drawn from verse 32, but it has the fault of being wholly novel and is contrary to that which all the Fathers and all interpreters give; moreover, it can not be reconciled with verses 26, 27, and 28, and is particularly at variance with the parallel passage of St. Matthew (xxiv. 30, 31), where there is no doubt that the reference is to the Last Judgment.

earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.'' Never, I believe, did there or could there come from the lips of man words more straightforward and daring than these. Consider well the words He uses: *In truth I say,* which is the strongest possible form of asseveration. Consider also the unequaled emphasis of the succeeding words: *''Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.''* No one could possibly make so solemn an affirmation unless he were either insane or fully conscious of his own inerrancy. No one has ever dared or ever will dare to say that Jesus was insane, He who has changed the face of the world, who gathers up into Himself the past and the future, and who is the center from which radiates all civilization and all progress. He was therefore fully conscious of the import of what He said, and fully conscious of His divinity, for only a God could utter words such as these, the like of which had never been heard before: *''Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.''*

The future soon verified His words in part, and this may be taken as an absolute guarantee that the others will also be verified. Jesus Christ, as I have said, foretold two events in this chapter, namely, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world; the first event was literally fulfilled five and thirty years after the prediction, and to this the whole world is a witness; who, then, can doubt that the second event will also be fulfilled just as Jesus Christ foretold?

Some may find it difficult to understand these words of Our Lord: *''Amen, I say to you, this*

generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled," from which it would seem that the generation of men living at the time of Christ would witness the end of the world, which is manifestly false.

But the difficulty is easily solved. The phrase, *"This generation shall not pass away,"* may be understood of the destruction of Jerusalem, and indeed there were many living at the time of Christ who witnessed that fearful catastrophe. But if this interpretation does not seem wholly conformable to the strict sense of the words of Christ, we may give another, which is more common and removes all doubt. *"This generation shall not pass away,"* that is, these descendants of Abraham, this Jewish nation, shall not cease to exist until Jerusalem is destroyed and the end of the world is come; and it is a singular and solitary fact in the history of all peoples, that this Jewish nation, scattered over the face of the earth, remains to this day and will continue to remain, a distinct people in the midst of all other peoples, as an abiding and visible proof that not a syllable of Christ's words shall be unfulfilled.

And now let us state briefly what has been thus far said and try to draw from it some thoughts for our spiritual benefit.

Jesus Christ foretells the end of time and the Last Judgment, and He points out the awe-inspiring events that will precede it. The general judgment will but confirm the particular judgment which awaits each of us at our death and which will soon come. We shall have nothing to fear from that great judgment if we are among the

number of the just; nay, its coming will fill us with joy, it will complete our redemption, and restore to us our bodies full of immortal life and vigorous with eternal youth. Let us, then, strive with all our strength to be found on that day among the elect, and we shall be among them if we cast out sin from our hearts and live in the friendship of God. Jesus Christ has said: "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*"

Second Sunday of Advent

HOMILY III

BRETHREN: What things soever were written, were written for our learning; that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind one toward another, according to Jesus Christ; that with one mind, and with one mouth, you may glorify God and the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also hath received you unto the honor of God. For I say that Christ Jesus was minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. But that the Gentiles are to glorify God for His mercy as it is written: Therefore will I confess to Thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and will sing to Thy name. And again he saith: Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again: Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and magnify Him, all ye peoples. And again Isaias saith: There shall be a root of Jesse; and He that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope. Now the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace in believing: that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* XV. 4-13.

THESE words, which the Church directs to be read in the Mass of this Sunday, are found toward the end of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans,

and I will ask your attention for a few moments while I explain them.

"Whatsoever things were written were written for our learning, that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope." To understand the meaning of these words it is necessary to show the connection between them and those that precede them. In the preceding verse the Apostle speaks of Jesus Christ, who in saving man did not consult His own natural inclinations, but bore all things; hence all the outrages committed against God were visited upon Him; He was the bailsman; and in confirmation of what he says St. Paul cites the words of the Psalm: *"The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon Me,"*[1] words put into the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself. Having called their attention to this oracle of Scripture, verified in Jesus Christ, the Apostle goes on to say that as a rule all the teachings of Holy Writ are for our spiritual advantage.

What are the books of Holy Writ? They are the divine law to which our whole life must be conformed; they are, as St. Athanasius says, letters sent by God to men, letters which contain His will, the supreme law for us all. *"All Scripture,"* says St. Paul in another place, *"is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice; that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work."*[2]

We can not save ourselves unless we know what to believe and what to do. And where are we to

[1] Ps. lxviii. 10.
[2] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

get this knowledge? From God alone, the fount of all truth. And how and through what agencies does God make known these truths to us? Through His word, and this may come to us by word of mouth through the apostles and the Church; or by the written word, through the divinely inspired books of Holy Writ. The first way is the easiest and most expeditious, and is sufficient for all men without distinction; the second is more difficult, less expeditious, and not possible to all, but still always holy and good. What can be holier and better than to learn the truths of faith from those Books which God willed to write for our instruction and comfort? The truths which fell from the lips of Christ and His apostles are written in Holy Scripture, and between us and those who listened to Christ and the apostles there is no difference; the truths are the same—they came to them through the ears, they come to us through the eyes.

There was a time, my friends, when the Scriptures were in the hands of all who could read, when they were read and were the subject of meditation even for the simple faithful; but in these days how many even of the educated laity read occasionally and meditate upon the truths of Holy Writ? All sorts of books are read, but the Book by excellence, the Book that is all truth, which tells us of the things of heaven and points out the path of virtue, is, alas, neglected and forgotten. But if you will not read it, if you will not meditate upon the truths it contains, listen at least to the explanation of them, which Holy Church commands shall be given to the people every Sunday.

And what do the Sacred Books teach us, and especially the words of the Prophet quoted by the Apostle? They teach us, and bear it well in mind, they teach us to be patient under trial and to be comforted in distress. Which of us, my dear friends, has not to suffer if we would be virtuous, and to struggle courageously? We must suffer, we must bear our cross daily, and often it is heavy enough. Very well, then. In Holy Writ, in the example of the saints, but above all in the example of Jesus Christ, we shall find light and strength, comfort and consolation amid the afflictions of this life, especially if we keep in view the reward which is promised us and which we confidently hope to obtain. A soul that kneels in the presence of Jesus Christ crucified and in the light of Holy Writ meditates upon His life, filled with sorrows and humiliations beyond all power of language to describe, and then reflects that He was God, the Saint of saints; a soul that believes that another life and an endless one will begin beyond the grave, in which the injustices of this life will be repaired and its fleeting sorrows compensated by ineffable and never-ending joys; a soul, having such thoughts, how can it do other than be comforted and rejoice? It should cry out with St. Paul, that it exceedingly abounds with joy in its tribulations, and that to die is a gain.

Tasting in hopeful anticipation the joys promised to him who suffers for Jesus Christ, St. Paul, in one of those impetuous bursts of love so frequent in his Letters, cries out: "*Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to be of one mind toward one another according to Jesus Christ.*"

The words, the God of patience and comfort, are a Hebrew expression, which means, God the giver of patience and comfort; God, who is most patient, and patience and comfort itself, grant you what is the most precious fruit of patience and the source of the purest consolation, namely, peace and concord among yourselves, according to Jesus Christ, or such as He wills.

My friends, the Apostle desired for his dear children peace and concord among themselves, as the greatest of all blessings. Have we this blessed peace, this single mind, as the Apostle says, in this parish, in our families, among ourselves? Alas, how much ill will there is, how much enmity, how much uncharitableness, and these sow the seeds of discord and destroy the peace of families. If fraternal charity does not dwell in the heart, how can we with one mind and "*with one mouth glorify God and the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ,*" as the Apostle bids us? Can a loving father accept with pleasure homage and testimonials of reverence and love from his children when he knows that jealousies and enmities exist among them? Assuredly not; neither can God, our Father, accept with pleasure our homage and our prayers if our hearts are not aflame with the divine fire of brotherly love. We should all, like the Christians of the early Church, have but one heart and one soul, and then our prayers and our praises would go out from our lips like a sweet perfume to make glad the heart of God.

Jesus Christ should be the model, sovereign and eternal, upon whom we should ever keep our eyes,

as the Apostle reminds us in every page and in almost every line of his incomparable Epistles. If the bond of charity in Jesus Christ binds all our hearts together and casts out from them all suspicion and strife, what will be the necessary consequence? *"Then you will receive one another, as Christ also hath received you unto the honor of God."* "And how," the Apostle seems to ask, "has Jesus Christ received you? Some of you are the children of Abraham and bear upon you the mark of the Covenant and of the divine promise made to the patriarchs; and many of you are Gentiles, born and grown up in the midst of the darkness of paganism; but Jesus Christ," the Apostle goes on, "has made no distinction; He has called equally to the Faith you Hebrews, and you Gentiles, and has taken you both equally to His Heart. If, then, Jesus Christ has received you all into His Church, if He loves you all as His children, and if He has loaded you with gifts, should not you also receive one another as brothers?" The reasoning could not be clearer or stronger. And here observe the difference between merely human societies and the divine society, or the Church. Here is a society, for instance, in which there are rich and poor, learned and ignorant, French and English, Germans and Italians, and so on; they are all men and recognize one another as such, but what a difference in the way each treats the other; they are mistrustful and suspicious one of the other; they call one another brothers, but their bearing toward one another is as that of strangers and sometimes as that of enemies. It is not thus in the Church, the great

family of Jesus Christ. All are sons of the same heavenly Father, all are brothers, and if there is a distinction it is in favor of the poor and the ignorant, because Jesus Christ said: *"I am come to preach the Gospel to the poor and to heal the contrite of heart."* In the Church of Jesus Christ there is neither Greek, nor Scythian, nor barbarian; all are equally redeemed by Him and all are brothers.

To prove that the Gentiles were called to the Faith as well as the Hebrews, St. Paul quotes the four prophetical utterances, which I have just read for you and which it is not necessary here to repeat. But it is well here to note a difference between the way in which the Hebrews were called and that in which the Gentiles were called. Jesus Christ called the Hebrews *"as minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers";* whereas He called the Gentiles *"to glorify God for His mercy."* And wherein lies the difference, my friends? Is not the call of the Hebrews a mercy of God as well as the call of the Gentiles? Assuredly, and who can doubt it? Why, then, does St. Paul attribute one to the *truth* of God, and the other to His *mercy?* The answer is plain. The conversion of the Hebrews is wholly and entirely the work of the goodness and mercy of God, as well as that of the Gentiles, as faith teaches. What right or claim have we to such a grace, we who have received everything from Him; we who have nothing of our own but sin; we who are but wretched creatures? We, who are not worthy to be His slaves, how could we aspire to that supreme

honor of becoming His children by adoption? God, solely out of His boundless goodness, repeatedly promised salvation through Jesus Christ to the children of Israel by the prophets and patriarchs; while to the Gentiles He never made any direct promise; nor did He give them the law of Moses, nor did He give them prophets and patriarchs; He gave them only the light of reason and with it the law of nature. In offering the Faith to the Hebrews God kept His promises made to them in the Sacred Books, and this is why St. Paul ascribes their call to the *truth* of God; while in offering the Faith to the Gentiles God does not mention any sort of promise, because He had made none to them, and hence St. Paul attributes their conversion wholly to His *mercy*. In a word God called the Hebrews both out of mercy and to keep the promises He had made to them, whereas He called the Gentiles solely out of mercy, because having made no promise to them there was none to be kept. We, my friends, are the descendants of those Gentiles, whom God called equally with the children of Israel; we are the heirs to their faith and in us is continued the divine mercy.

The faith of the Romans, to whom St. Paul wrote, was celebrated throughout the world; let me ask you, Is your faith like theirs, living and active? In the midst of the dangers that surround us and of the snares that are laid for us, do we preserve our faith pure and untainted, as the most precious gift of the divine mercy? Do our works do honor to our faith, do they prove it to be living and operative? What reply does the conscience of each of us give?

The last verse of the Epistle is this: "*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.*" This is a loving and a holy wish, which as a father the Apostle sends to his spiritual children. It is as if he said: may the God of hope, the author, the source, and the ultimate object of all hope, banish from you all strife and discord and fill you with that peace which is the daughter of faith, and strengthen you in the power of the Holy Spirit. Or, still more clearly, may God grant that you may remain firm in the faith you have received, and in the hope that is begotten of faith; the fruit of this faith and hope will be joy and peace; and may the grace and the power of the Holy Spirit preserve and multiply these blessings.[1] St. Paul represents the joy and peace, which he wishes to the faithful, as the fruits of faith and hope, and he does so with reason.

Faith, my friends, tells us clearly what our origin is; it points out the path along which we must journey and the goal which we must strive to reach; it teaches us whence we came and whither we are going. Hope, which is founded on faith, teaches the means by the use of which we may and must reach the end for which we were created. Fancy a man who knows not who created him or sent him into this world; who knows nothing of a life beyond the grave, of that region whither all

[1]Any one who has even once read the Epistles of St. Paul will have discovered that his periods are intricate, or rather, tangled and rugged, that his ideas are grouped together, his words are densely marshaled, his members multiplied, so that it is difficult to follow the leading thought. This verse, which I have attempted to make clear by a paraphrase containing all the elements of the Apostle's thought, is certainly an example of this.

must go and whence none return; that, in consequence, he has not and can never have a shred of hope in a future life—and would not such a man be as one lost upon the earth? Fancy that you had your eyes bandaged and that you were taken up by some unseen and powerful force, transported thousands and thousands of miles away and set down in the midst of a desert, that upon opening your eyes and looking about you you saw no trace of a road, not even a hill or a tree, that dense clouds shut out from you the light of the sun and of the stars, and that you saw only the arid sand and the desert in all the majesty of its oppressive silence. Could you tell whence you had come and whither you must turn your steps to escape from this desert, where, if you remain, you must die? It would be impossible. This is a true image of a man without faith and hope. He finds himself set down here on the earth as in the heart of a limitless desert. In his distress he asks himself, Who gave me this life? Who placed me here? Whither must I go? Ahead of me is the grave and I shall soon drop into it; but what is beyond the grave? Does all end in the graveyard? Will there be another life, and what sort? These are inevitable and dismaying questions to which he gets no reply; the voice of the wretched man is lost in the desert; it has not so much as a distant echo for an answer; all is silent as death. Such is a man destitute of faith and hope, and a condition more desolate and comfortless can not be imagined; it is nothingness and nothingness in its most dismal form. But let a ray of light shine out from on high, a ray of faith and hope, and the

frightful desert is covered with blooming vegetation and beautiful flowers, and in the distance is visible the longed-for land of our home and the road that leads to it. Oh, the peace and the joy of the Christian's faith and hope!

There are workmen who labor all the day long in shops and warehouses and on the public ways, farmers who endure the heats of summer and the frosts of winter, poor mothers and widows who are barely able to feed and clothe their children; they suffer and God alone knows all their sorrows; but they know that God has created them, that Jesus Christ has redeemed them, that He suffered as they suffer and still more; they know that the eye of God is ever upon them, that He numbers their tears, that He sustains them with His grace, that after death will begin another and an endless life and that then fullest justice will be done to all; they know that Jesus Christ said: "Blessed are the poor; blessed are they that mourn, blessed are they who suffer for justice' sake, blessed are they who are persecuted, because great shall be their reward." The thought of the eternal reward that awaits them gives them comfort, changes their sorrow into joy, and gives them in this world of exile a taste of the joys of heaven. We will close with St. Paul's words: "*The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost.*"

HOMILY IV

At that time: When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to Him: Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another? And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them: And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is He of whom it is written: *Behold I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.*—Gospel, *Matt.* xi. 2-10.

My Friends, such is the Gospel of this Sunday, the second of Advent, taken from the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew. The sense of the words of Our Lord is so plain that they scarcely need an explanation; but if the meaning of the words of the Gospel is easily understood it may not be so easy for us to apply them to ourselves and to our needs. We frequently see physicians, who fall sick, and who, though eminent in their profession, call in other physicians to minister to them, men much inferior in knowledge and

skill to themselves. The same happens in the spiritual care of souls; we need others who may suggest remedies and lovingly minister to our ills.

To-day I shall confine myself to drawing from the words of Christ some lessons useful for our mutual edification.

The Gospel which has just been read consists of two distinct parts: in the first part is given an account of the embassy which John Baptist sent to Jesus Christ; in the second are given the reply of Jesus Christ and His eulogy on His precursor. Before giving the explanation of the text permit me to say a few words by way of introduction.

The office of the Precursor was to prepare the Jewish people for the coming of Christ, and this John had marvelously fulfilled by his life of austerity in the desert and by his preaching of penance along the banks of the Jordan. The burning words of the Baptist had wonderfully stirred both priests and people and had gathered about him a following of disciples. More than once John seeing Jesus Christ had pointed Him out to the multitudes as the Lamb of God and protested his own unworthiness to loose the latchets of His shoes. He affirmed that He had seen the Holy Ghost descend upon Him and that all should become His followers. John had the joy and the glory of giving to Jesus Christ His first and chief apostles, namely, Peter and Andrew, John and James. Having fulfilled his mission the Precursor retired into obscurity. To his other crimes Herod added that of casting John into prison, because the Baptist with the courage of a saint rebuked him for his guilty relations with the wife of his

brother. The fame of the preaching and of the miracles of Jesus reached John in his prison. It should be remembered that John had still a certain number of disciples who visited him in prison and who probably brought him word of the great works wrought by Christ. These disciples had not done as their companions and become followers of Jesus Christ, nor had they obeyed John who encouraged them to do so. It may be that they cherished a feeling of envy against Jesus Christ, and they complained that He also baptized, thus obscuring the glory of their own master.

These disciples, otherwise good men, were, as you see, excessively attached to John. This ill-advised love for their master made them disobedient to him and unjust toward Jesus Christ. Their love for their master was intensified by their own self-love, which made them obstinate and sensitive at seeing the reputation of John apparently waning. We are so constituted that we sometimes have an ill-regulated love for what is in itself good, and we hide our dislike and ill-will toward our neighbor under an apparent zeal for the honor of another.

Even in our own day we sometimes see persons who come to church and are assiduous in the practice of their religion, and others again who stay away, solely because either they like or dislike this priest or that. They are like the disciples of John and in dealing with things of God they regard men rather than God.

I am not ignorant, my friends, that certain modern students of sacred and biblical science, learned men, give to this Gospel narrative an interpreta-

tion different from that which you have just heard. They say that John Baptist, shut up in the fortress of Machaerus, in a moment of weakness doubted whether the Jesus, whom he had saluted as the Lamb of God, and the Saviour of the world, was truly the expected Messias and the Son of God made man. They add that John in sending the embassy wished in a way to urge Jesus to show Himself to be the Messias and by His authority to come to the aid of an abandoned prisoner.

Both explanations are wholly at variance with the character of the Precursor. It would be doing him an injustice to suspect that John after his solemn profession to Jesus would stagger in his faith or would need the comfort of a message, or would solicit even indirectly his own release from confinement. John was not a reed to be shaken by the wind, as Jesus will soon tell us, nor was he a man to grow pale at the sight of a gibbet. His firm faith, the supreme trials to which he had been put, the indomitable courage he had displayed in the synagogue and in the presence of Herod, all force us to reject these interpretations as unworthy of the greatest of those born of woman.

John, then, wished his disciples to be convinced that Jesus was truly the Messias. What did he do to enlighten them? John said to himself: If these my disciples, who are over-sensitive of my good name, shall see Jesus Christ, and witness His works, and hear His words, they will assuredly be convinced that He is the Messias and they will leave me to follow Him. Therefore calling them to him he said: "Go to Jesus and say to Him in my name: Art thou He whom we expect, or must we look for another?"

Admire, my friends, this wonderful man's great love of truth and his zeal for the cause of Jesus Christ. He uses all his authority and employs a holy industry to detach his disciples from himself and to send them to Our Lord; and even in prison, when the axe of the executioner is flashing over his head, he continues his office of precursor and apostle.

The disciples obeyed at once; they went to Jesus and repeated to Him the words that John had put into their mouths: "*Art Thou He who is to come,* that is, the Messias, and the Saviour of the world, *or shall we look for another?*" The question was precise and to the point, and the answer given, not in words, but in deeds more eloquent than words, was equally precise and to the point: "*Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*" Jesus Christ could have said to the messengers of John: "Yes, tell your master that I am verily He whom Israel expects, the Messias, as John himself has proclaimed Me to be before the people." But instead Jesus Christ wanted the messengers themselves to know the truth and He wanted to give to themselves and to John the answer of which the facts they had before their eyes were the basis and the proof. At the very time when the messengers of John appeared before Jesus, He was surrounded by a crowd of infirm, those suffering from all manner of disease, the blind, the lame, the deaf, and lepers, who implored Him to cure them and who were healed; and there were also the dead who were restored to life. St. Luke nar-

rates this fact, thus supplementing the narrative of St. Matthew. These cures, so diverse, numerous, and instantaneous, wrought by a sign, by a word, before the multitude, who witnessed everything, dissipated all doubt concerning the divine mission of Jesus Christ and forced the most stubborn and distrustful to accept His teaching and to believe without wavering that He was verily the looked-for Saviour of the world.

The Gospel does not tell us what the messengers of John did or said, but being, as they must have been, upright and honest men, I think they yielded at once to the evidence of facts, reported to John what they had seen and heard, and rejoiced his heart by declaring their readiness to follow Jesus Christ.

Allow me, my friends, to make an application which the fact just narrated naturally suggests. The blind and the lame, the lepers and the deaf went to Jesus to be cured; even the dead were brought to Him that they might be restored to life; and Jesus received all kindly, granted their requests, and sent all away comforted and rejoicing. How many among us are blind and halt mentally, covered with the filthy leprosy of sin, deaf to the voice of conscience, and miserably dead in soul? And we are all the more unfortunate and objects of compassion in that we frequently do not know our condition. It is a great misfortune not to see the light of the sun and to live in dense and hopeless darkness; but it is an incomparably greater misfortune not to see the light of truth and to grope in the darkness of error. We are moved to pity at seeing one who can not stand on his feet or walk a step, but a still more deplorable

sight is that of so many of our fellow-men who lie listless, willing slaves to their baser passions. It gives one a cold chill to look upon a leper, wasting away with this incurable disease, his flesh falling from him in shreds and he drinking in by slow draughts the most cruel of deaths, but what shall be said of a sinner who, because he is such, is an object of horror to God and His angels. Here is an unfortunate man who is deaf; he is always sad, gloomy, and suspicious; all intercourse between him and his fellow-men is broken off, no note of harmony comes to him to rejoice his hearing and no word to awaken his intelligence to a knowledge of himself, of his duty, and of his God. He is a faint image of those Christians who never hear the word of God and who close the ears of their heart to the cries of a remorseful conscience. A corpse is a frightful sight—the eyes half open and glassy that see not, the ears that hear not, the silent tongue, the rigid hands and feet, the whole body immobile, cold, lifeless—all inspire a nameless fear; but a soul in sin, if only we could see it, is a sight incomparably more horrifying than any corpse. It is dead to grace and to God, and of itself it is incapable of any good act, and should it be separated from the body while in this condition it would be lost forever. What, then, are these poor blind and lame, the lepers, the deaf, and the dead to do? That same Jesus who healed the diseases of the body and raised the dead to life, still and always abides in the Church and He is ready and anxious to renew in the souls of men the same miracles which He wrought in Judea on their bodies. If Jesus never sent away a single person

sick of body without healing him and often when He was not asked, what will He not do for those who are sick of soul? Did He not come on earth chiefly to save souls? Then let us go to Him, and the eyes of our mind will be opened; we shall stand erect upon our feet and tread in the path of virtue; our consciences will be cleansed, our ears spiritually healed, and our souls will rise to a new life, because He is the light, the truth, and the life.

I can not help calling your attention to these beautiful words of the Son of God, which He gave us as a certain proof of His coming: "*The poor have the Gospel preached to them.*" I can not tell you how these words thrill my very heart. The world, my friends, never forget it, has no love for the poor, who are necessarily illiterate. The learned and the philosophers of all ages and countries, not only never deigned to instruct the poor, but they were at pains to keep them in ignorance and would not permit them to cross the threshold of their schools and academies. Learning was the privilege of the few, the heritage of the rich. It was a cruelty beyond name.[1] Jesus Christ was the first to teach that His knowledge should belong to all and especially to the poor, because their needs were greatest. It was Jesus who brought upon earth that holy equality of all as regards the possession of truth. It was He who said to His apostles: "*Go, teach all nations. Freely have you received, freely give to all. My Gospel must be*

[1]Renan, in writing on science, tells us substantially, in flowing and graceful periods, that science is not for the people and that it is essentially *aristocratic*. This is nauseating.

preached to the poor." What a comforting doctrine! What a blessing!

"*Blessed is he that is not scandalized in Me.*" The hardest trial to which the faith of the apostles and those who lived at that time was put, was unquestionably the very sight of Jesus Himself. He was a poor man, He had not whereon to lay His head, He lived on charity, He had always toiled as other workmen toiled, He suffered from hunger and thirst, He was calumniated, persecuted, and put to death on the cross as a malefactor, and to be obliged to believe that such a man was God, the Lord of heaven and earth! We must confess, my friends, that the very sight of Jesus Christ was a rock of scandal, that it was a temptation to say: "No, this man may be a saint indeed, and a worker of great miracles, but He can not be God. He may be a prophet and a man of God, but God!—no, it is out of the question, it is contrary to reason that the majesty of God should be so abased." And thus indeed did many reason at that time and refused to believe in Jesus Christ. This is why He said: "*Blessed is he that is not scandalized in Me.*" We live more than nineteen hundred years after those men, we know not only the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ Himself, but also those equally great, wrought in His name; and we are amazed when we contemplate the immense glory that has gathered about His person in the course of centuries and raised Him to a height in the world's estimation that has no parallel. No, we can not take scandal at the humiliations of Jesus Christ, because they witness to His immeasurable charity and are as

nothing when compared with His resplendent glories.

And when the messengers of John went their way, Jesus Christ began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "*What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?*" Doubtless the coming of John's messengers and their questions were discussed by the multitudes and the name of John was for the moment on the lips of all. Hence Jesus Christ seized the opportunity to speak of him, to praise him, and to bear public testimony to him, as John had done to Him, thus showing that between them there existed the most perfect harmony.[1]

No one ever had the privilege of receiving from Jesus Christ such splendid eulogies as those received by John. Many of the multitude to whom Jesus addressed His words, must have gone out into the desert to see John when he was preaching there, and hence Jesus said to them: "You went out to see John; you did well; and what did you see? Possibly a man who changed at every breath of wind?" The question evidently implied a negative answer, as if one should say: "Surely you did not see a man who yielded at every gust of wind? You found a resolute man, equal to any emergency, one who was not frightened by threats or seduced by promises, who was always consistent, whose speech was ever the same, who, whether addressing the people or standing in the presence

[1]Renan has daringly asserted that the Precursor was jealous of the popularity and growing fame of the *young Rabbi*, as he calls Jesus Christ. This is an outrage on common-sense and profoundly disgusting to any one who has a particle, I will not say of faith, but of intelligence.

of a king, had one inflexible rule and that was his love of truth."

My friends, how many of us would be worthy of the praises of John? Let us be honest; we are too often as reeds shaken by the wind; we are weak because we fear criticism, because we love the world's praise, because we are overcome by human respect; and we sacrifice conscience, duty, and truth.

Jesus Christ, continuing His praise of John, says: "*But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings.*" "You saw John in the desert. How was he dressed? Possibly his garments were rich and soft? Did he feast sumptuously and was his food rich and choice? Was he a man who loved comforts and a pleasant life and indulged his body? Ye who saw him, tell Me." "*He was clothed with camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and he ate locusts and wild honey.*"[1] John was an austere man and a man of penance. Those who live easy lives, who love pleasure and indulge the flesh, dwell in the houses of the great and in the palaces of kings, and not in the desert as John did.

In these words Jesus teaches us an important lesson. He teaches us that those who lead luxurious lives, who indulge their appetites and dress in soft garments, do not lead the life of a follower either of John or of Him; He teaches us that we

[1]It need excite no surprise that John fed on locusts in the desert. Then locusts were used as food by those who dwelt in the desert, and the same is true to some extent even now.

must make war on the flesh, mortify the senses, and, in a word, lead a penitential life, if we would be His disciples. Virtue, my friends, does not thrive except in the shadow of the cross; austerity of life builds it up, indulgence pulls it down.[1] The idea that the practice of virtue is possible or that salvation can be attained by any other means is a strange delusion.

"But what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet." Jesus Christ gives John a triple praise. First He says that he is a firm, unbending man; next that he is a mortified man; and finally that he is a prophet and more than a prophet. The word prophet in Holy Writ is sometimes used in a wide sense to designate one who announces truth in the name of God; again, and more frequently, it is used in a more restricted sense to designate one who foretells future events. Here Jesus Christ, in calling John a prophet, if I mistake not, uses the word in both senses. John was a prophet because he was a teacher of the people and preached a moral doctrine, which was in substance that of the Gospel. He was also a prophet because he reminded the people of the promises made to Israel, announced that the predictions of the ancient prophets were soon to be fulfilled, and assured them that the coming of the Messias was at hand. Finally, he was more than a prophet, because he pointed out with his finger the Saviour of the world, whom the other prophets had only foretold from afar.

The Gospel closes with a prediction of the prophet Malachias which Jesus Christ declares is

[1]Tertullian, *Ad Mart.*

fulfilled in John Baptist: "*For this* (John) *is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.*"[1] Christ, as is clear from Scripture, was to come twice on the earth; first as the Redeemer of the world, and next as supreme Judge. The first coming has already taken place, the second will take place at the end of time. The precursor of the first was John Baptist; the precursor of the second will be Elias. The spirit, the virtue, and I may say, the ministry of these two great men are similar and almost the same. This is why in Sacred Scripture one is often put for the other, and Jesus Christ Himself says that Elias is already come and that John is he.[2] But it is clear from the context that Jesus Christ called John Elias, not because John was truly Elias, but because he was full of the spirit of Elias and prepared the way for Him at His first coming.

My friends, let the words of Jesus Christ, which you have just heard, and the examples of virtue given by His precursor, sink deep into your minds; store them in your memory and study to imitate them.

[1] Matt. xi. 10.
[2] Matt. xi. 14.

Third Sunday of Advent

HOMILY V

REJOICE in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. —EPISTLE, *Phil.* iv. 4-7.

THESE four are the closing verses of St. Paul's short, beautiful, and most affectionate Letter to the faithful of the Church of Philippi, the principal city of Macedonia. These words of the Apostle need no explanation, but they contain practical lessons of the utmost importance, which should claim your attention.

"*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice.*" St. Paul wrote this Letter at Rome, as is clear from the greetings at the close of it, to the faithful at Philippi; and during his first imprisonment, about the year 60 of our era.

This apostle was certainly a most wonderful man. He was subjected to every manner of trial and suffering and of these he has left us an account both in this and many other of his Letters. From Jerusalem he was brought in chains to Rome and there cast into prison under Nero; he saw death staring him in the face; he had been forsaken by many, even his own disciples had

added to his grief in prison;[1] and yet filled with a holy enthusiasm, an enthusiasm inspired by faith and charity, he writes to his beloved children and bids them *"Rejoice."* He goes further, adding: *"Always rejoice,"* and still he repeats: *"Again, I say rejoice."* But how can one rejoice in the midst of the fears and terrors of a persecution, with manacled hands, and distant only a few steps from Nero, that monster of cruelty? The Apostle lifts his eyes on high and fixes them in faith on God, and in Him, and in Him alone he finds comfort and that joy which he wishes to pour into the hearts of his beloved children.

There are two kinds of joy, one of heaven, the other of earth; one comes from man, the other from God; one gives bodily gratification, the other inundates the soul, thrills it, and is participated in also by the body. There is a joy of the avaricious man who looks with ecstasy upon his well-filled coffers; there is a joy of the proud and vain man, who delights in applause, and is intoxicated with the incense of an obsequious crowd; there is a joy of the glutton who finds his happiness in eat-

[1]See the Letter to the Philippians (i. 15, 16). We too frequently fancy that the Christians at the time of the apostles were all virtuous and saintly. Such was not the case. Men always continue to be men even though they are Christians, and for the most part they are a mixture of virtue, vice, and frailty. We know that scandals and disorders existed in the Church during the life of the apostles, and of this there is ample evidence in the Letters of St. Paul and in the Acts of the Apostles. We know, also, that a certain Diotrephes, a wealthy layman, as some say, proud and haughty, wished to rule the faithful and arrogate to himself episcopal jurisdiction, and drive St. John from his Church. And in this Letter St. Paul tells us that some to spite him in prison, and others out of envy, set themselves to preach Jesus Christ. At this the great apostle says he rejoices, provided only *"Christ be preached."*

ing and drinking; there is a joy of the voluptuous man whose whole being revels in wantonness; these are low, vulgar joys, unworthy a man and incapable of making him happy, because they are fleeting and pass rapidly away, and if for a moment they satisfy our baser passions and the body, which perishes at death, they leave the soul empty, comfortless, and seared, as if a hot blast had passed over it.

Ask the favorites of the world, who have trodden all the paths of pleasure; who have plucked every flower that came in their way; who have accumulated their millions; who have reached the height of their ambition and look down upon the multitudes below; who have denied their appetite neither food nor drink, no matter what the cost; who have had everything that heart could desire or the passions crave, ask them: "Are you happy?" They will reply with one voice: "We are tired of life. Life is a burden. Our heart is empty." Such is the joy of the world.

There is a joy of the humble man, who has no illusions about himself; of the poor man who is resigned and contented with his lot; of the man who is master of his passions and keeps them under control; there is a joy of the man who is chaste and just and charitable, a tranquil joy, ever the same, which inundates the soul, thrills its every fiber, which endures in the midst of the pains and hardships of this life, which is as a breath of heaven, bringing God near to us and making us almost feel His substantial presence. This is the joy of the Lord of which St. Paul writes. Seek not the joy of the world, love it not, but the joy of God. "*Re-*

joice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice.'' This joy of virtue, this pure and holy joy sweetens the sorrows that are never absent from us on this earth, fills the soul with a marvelous strength and speeds our journey on the way to heaven.

St. Francis of Assisi sang while in his agony upon his poor bed of straw and St. Louis Gonzaga exclaimed: ''Joyful we go forward.'' St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Philip Neri were always in good humor and joyful and happy amid the toils, the cares, and the hardships of this life. Theirs was the joy of the children of God, that which St. Paul had in mind when he wrote: *''Rejoice in the Lord always.''*

''Let your benignity be known to all men.'' The Greek word used by St. Paul and which I have translated *benignity,* is a word of flexible meaning and may signify *modesty, gracious manners, affability, kindness.* The meaning of St. Paul here is that in our external conduct, in word and deed and deportment, we should bear ourselves toward all in such way as to be agreeable to each and offensive to none. And all this is the outcome and the external expression of charity, which prompts us when possible to abstain from what may displease our neighbor and to do what may give him innocent pleasure. According to St. Paul a Christian should be agreeable, amiable, and acceptable to those among whom he lives, because in whatever he does he acts under the inspiration of the charity of Jesus Christ.

And why should we exercise this benignity to all? *''Because,''* answers St. Paul, *''the Lord is nigh.''* The Lord is nigh: does this mean, as some

have said, that the day of final judgment is at hand? No, for Jesus Christ would not say when this day will come, and the Apostle himself in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians bids them not to be frightened as if the day of the Lord were at hand.[1] The Lord is *nigh,* because the day of our death, and therefore the day when each of us must go to judgment, is ever nigh, no matter how long we may live, for life passes as a shadow; the Lord is *nigh,* because in Him we live, and move, and have our being; because He sees us at all times and in all places, and searches our thoughts and affections. Let us be always on our guard, for as St. Paul says, "we are always in His presence." What stronger motive than this could we have to live holily?

Here follows a verse in which St. Paul gives us a practical rule by which to regulate our lives as Christians: "*Be nothing solicitous.*" In the midst of our occupations, trials, and privations, even when we have an abundance of this world's goods, we are easily worried and we worry those with whom we live. We are filled with hopes and fears and anxious desires and we keep ourselves in a perpetual ferment, and thus all peace is banished from the heart.

When St. Paul says: "*Be nothing solicitous,*" he does not mean that we should neglect our business or that we should live thoughtlessly, unmindful of to-morrow, stupidly affirming that we have given our every care into the keeping of divine Providence. If this were so, St. Paul would have preached recklessness, inculcated sloth, spoken in

[1] II. 2.

condemnation of his whole life, and given us a command to tempt Providence. He means that we shall discharge our every duty and then commit ourselves to the providence of God, perfectly resigned to His holy will and perfectly at peace, knowing that He will arrange all things for our good.

And what really happens? Unfortunately, in our conduct we frequently fall into two extremes. Now we rely wholly upon our strength, upon our talent, and our ability, forgetting that if God is not with us all must fail; again, we expect God to do everything, as if we ourselves have nothing to do and as if God puts a premium on idleness and sloth. The truth is, my friends, that the aid of God and our own efforts must always go together in whatever we do, and if either is wanting it is folly to hope that the undertaking will be a success. Can the light of the sun reach our eyes if we do not open them? Will the fields be covered with grain if they are not sown with seed and cultivated? Can our lungs breathe if there is no air? Never forget that while God has created us without ourselves, He will not save us without ourselves. Let us work and do our duty without being anxious, assured that if we do what we can God will not fail to do His part, and the union of the two forces, the divine and the human, will successfully accomplish whatever we undertake.

What must be done to banish the anxiety which so frequently disturbs our hearts? St. Paul tells us: "*In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made*

known to God.'' When we are fearful that our affairs are taking a bad turn and our soul is borne down with trouble and anxiety and is in a turmoil of agitation, let us lift our thoughts to Him who sees all and is all-powerful, to Him who is ever near us, and who tenderly loves us; and, as children would to a loving father, let us open our souls to Him in *prayer;* and if the tempest of the soul is not stilled, let us continue to pray still more fervently, and our prayer will then become supplication. Here the difference between *prayer* and *supplication* is brought out. Supplication is prayer with insistence and fervor; when the need is more pressing our prayer should also become more urgent and thus pass into a supplication.

If God hears us we should give Him thanks for the favor received; if in His wisdom He puts off listening to our petition and leaves us still to battle with the storm, we should thank Him just the same, because He strengthens and comforts us, because He is acting for our greater good, and because His blessed will is ever our inviolable law. My friends, let us never forget this valuable lesson of the Apostle, that in all things we must have recourse to God, that prayer is the medicine of a sick soul and the anchor of our salvation.

The Apostle closes the portion of the Epistle I have read for you with this wish, than which there could not be a more touching one: *''And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your minds and hearts in Christ Jesus Our Lord.''* Peace, there is no sound sweeter to the ear, nothing more ardently desired, or more jealously guarded than peace. All seek it, all yearn for it,

all salute it as the greatest good that can be had here below.

What is peace? It was defined by St. Augustine as the *tranquillity of order.* When we observe order, that is, when we observe justice, we have peace. We all have duties toward ourselves, toward our neighbor, and toward God. We have duties toward ourselves to watch over our thoughts and affections, to repress our disorderly passions, our pride, our ill-regulated attachment to the things of earth, our sensuality and intemperance, our envy, anger, and all other passions that rise in rebellion against us. Would we have peace with ourselves? Well, then, let us re-establish order in our soul, conquer our rebellious passions and reduce them to obedience, set up the reign of virtue and make faith the rule of all our actions.

Again, we have duties toward our neighbor and many. There are fathers and mothers and children, masters and servants, rich and poor; let each do his duty, always and faithfully; and in doing his duty let him be careful not to trespass upon the duties of others. Let us have great sympathy with all and true and generous love toward all; let us seek the interest of others as we would our own, and then we shall establish order or peace between our neighbor and ourselves.

Finally, we have duties toward God, and these are primary duties and the foundation of all others. Let us keep His law, fear His judgment, love Him as a father, never doing anything that can give Him offense, and then we shall have order and peace with God.

Peace! How can he have it who lives in sin and knows he is an enemy to God? One who knows he has committed a crime and is deserving of the supremest punishment, who knows that the officers of the law are upon his tracks seeking him, has not an hour's peace. Every noise, the rustling of the leaves, the sight of a man approaching him—everything disturbs him, frightens him, fills him with suspicion and dread. But think of one who has offended the omnipotent God, from whom there is no escape, the God who patiently waits and into whose hands he must fall in the end; can this man ever have true peace? It is impossible. He alone has true peace, the peace of God, the peace that comes from God, who masters his passions, who loves his neighbor as himself, who flies sin, and who lives in God's friendship. Happy man! This peace, of all treasures the most precious, will guard his mind and heart and allow him to taste here on earth how sweet and good the Lord is to those who love Him.

HOMILY VI

At that time: The Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to John to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No. They said, therefore, unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? what sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water; but there hath stood One in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.—Gospel, *John* i. 19-28.

My Friends, the Gospel which you have just heard read is that which the Church selects for the Mass of the Third Sunday of Advent.

Before entering upon an explanation of the Gospel text, which is plain and simple, it may be interesting to know the reason why the Great Council of Jerusalem sent this solemn embassy to John. In those days there was a general expectation of the coming of the Messias among the Hebrew people, and in consequence also, though by no means so general, among other nations. The ancient traditions, always vivid throughout Israel, and still more explicitly, the clear predictions of the prophets, pointed out that the time had come when the Saviour of the world might be expected to appear among men. There are undoubted proofs in the Gospel, which it is not necessary to quote here, that this expectation was common in Israel; and the celebrated historians Tacitus and Suetonius bear witness that, precisely at the time of Christ, the coming of some great personage was expected

among the Gentiles. It is not a matter of surprise, then, that when John Baptist came up out of the desert and appeared on the banks of the Jordan, preaching penance, not only the people, but their leaders also, should have seriously entertained the thought that he was the expected Messias. The miraculous birth of John, his sojourn in the desert, his austere life, his fearless speech to all, even to those in power, so like that of Elias, the whole life and history of the man, naturally stirred the popular imagination, and in consequence drew upon him the attention of the leading men of the synagogue. Many, and especially those who had gone out to the Jordan, and had seen him and heard his glowing words, asked themselves: "May not John be the very Messias whom we expect?" John's reputation in a little while grew enormously, and the belief that he was really the Messias spread so generally that the chiefs of the synagogue, either to encourage the belief of the multitude, or to clear up the doubt and set right the judgment of the people, resolved to send a solemn embassy to John and thus force him to say who he was. And here begins the Gospel narrative of St. John which I am to explain, and I trust you will give me your attention.

"*At that time the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to John to ask him: Who art thou?*" This embassy, composed of priests and levites, must have been a large one and invested with authority. It is only natural to suppose that a large number accompanied this embassy, because the name of John was now celebrated and there was the keenest desire in all to hear from

him an explicit answer that would set their doubts at rest. To the Jewish people the Messias meant everything, because in Him were centered all the predictions of the prophets, in Him were accomplished the rites, the sacrifices, the Law of Moses, and all the longings of their fathers. Fancy, then, how great was the desire of the people to hear John's answer.

It is always thus, my friends. Whenever an event takes place that deeply touches religious sentiment, no matter when or where, the people are roused and it would seem as if a breath from heaven is passing over them. We have instances of this in our day, even though this is said, and with some truth, to be an age of religious indifference. Let the report go abroad that in a certain place some extraordinary manifestation has occurred, the eyes in an image or statue have moved, or shed tears, and forthwith the people are agitated and hurry from all sides to see and hear and satisfy themselves of the fact; and among the throng of the devout, you will see many who are not religiously inclined and not even believers; they, too, want to see and hear, for they are under the spell of the popular movement. And why is this? Because a real and total religious indifference does not exist, and because deep down in human nature the religious sentiment ever abides as indestructible as the reason itself. Let freethinkers reflect on it, and be persuaded that it is vain and foolish to try to destroy the religious sentiment. They may lead it astray, they may change it into superstition, but annihilate it they never can; and if they examine themselves well,

they will find that they still believe, and more it may be, than they could wish. And now let us go back to the Gospel.

The messengers said to John: *"Who art thou?"* It is likely that the messengers addressed to John a formal and somewhat lengthy discourse politely stating to him that they wished to know who he was. The Evangelist, according to his custom, reduces the question to what is absolutely necessary and makes the messengers say briefly: *"Who art thou?"* And the Evangelist adds: *"John confessed and he did not deny; and he confessed, I am not the Christ."* How plain and straightforward his language! He confessed, that is, he said what he should say, and he did not gainsay the truth. John knew that the people, and possibly the messengers themselves, were disposed to believe that he was the Messias, and therefore to remove all doubt he protested: *"I am not the Christ."*

What a wonderful man the Precursor was! He could have kept silence, or dissimulated, or given an indirect answer, and let them believe that he was the Messias, and thus have shared at least in a measure the supreme honor due to Him. Had he been a vain or a weak man, fond of praise and honor, and very few are not, he would have yielded to this strong temptation; but the Baptist did not hesitate an instant, and before they had time to ask him in explicit terms if he were the Christ, he protested in the presence of all, saying: "No, I am not the Messias, I am not the Christ." We must admire such exalted virtue, guard ourselves against the insidious breath of flattery, and

imitate the Precursor in refusing to be praised, when praise was not due, and in loving truth and only truth.

The messengers were astonished at so peremptory a reply and they again interrogated him, saying: *"Art thou Elias?"* The Hebrews, knowing that Elias was to come upon the earth and go before the Lord, and confounding the first with the second coming of Jesus Christ, put to John this question: *"Art thou Elias?"* And John again replied and so clearly as to remove all doubt: *"I am not."*

It is true that Jesus Christ, speaking of John, as is recorded in St. Matthew, says that he is Elias: *"He is Elias."* But He only meant by these words that John went before Him as Elias would later, at His second coming, and that John possessed the virtues and the spirit of Elias.

As John had thus far only denied that he was either the Christ or Elias the messengers insisted on having an explicit answer as to who he was. They said to him: *"Art thou the Prophet?"* It is to be noted here that the messengers did not ask him if he were *a* prophet, but if he were *the* Prophet, designating by the article *the* a determinate prophet known and expected by the people. Who could this prophet be? St. Justin Martyr[1] relates that there was a belief among the Hebrew people that the Messias on first coming would for a time remain concealed and that He would be made known by a prophet. Hence the messengers asked John if he were this prophet. This belief was likely a creation of the popular imagination,

[1]Dialog., Contra Triphon.

or a distorted version of the account of the Precursor. As might be anticipated, John replied concisely: *"No."* Our Lord teaches us in the Gospel that the language of His followers should be *"Yea, yea; Nay, nay."* Subterfuges, reticences, half-truths, so common in the world, are wholly opposed to the honesty and frankness which should be characteristic of every Christian. John Baptist in his clear and fearless replies anticipated the teaching of Jesus Christ. My friends, always love truth, shun double-tongued practice and lying, and keep in mind the words of the Holy Ghost, that a lying tongue kills the soul.

Then the messengers pressed John still more closely, saying to him: *"Who art thou, that we may give an account to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself?"* Forced to say who he was, he replied: *"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Isaias."* Which means: "I am he who was foretold by Isaias, who goes before the Lord; I must prepare the people to receive Him, and I must form His first disciples."

It was the office of John to prepare the people for the coming of Christ and to bring disciples to Him. This is also the office of the pastor and of every priest. Like John he must teach the people, preach penance to them, withdraw them from their evil ways and bring them to Jesus. And if his office is to teach you, to correct you and to lead you to Jesus, assuredly your duty is to listen to him, and to suffer yourselves to be corrected and brought to Jesus Christ. His duty is bound up inseparably with yours.

"*And they that were sent,*" says the Evangelist, "*were of the Pharisees.*" That is, they were priests and levites belonging to the sect of the Pharisees, and who these Pharisees were I shall have a more favorable occasion to say in another place.

The replies of John did not satisfy the messengers, who were proud men and captious and true Pharisees, and, arrogantly assuming a certain authority over the Baptist, they said: "*Why dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet?*" Which was as much as to say: "You have no right to baptize or to use this ceremony introduced by yourself." You know, my friends, John baptized in the Jordan all who came asking baptism. It was a new ceremony, as I think, introduced by John himself. The men went down into the river and John sprinkled water over them. It was a sort of confession of sin, an avowal that they needed cleansing; it was a cry for pardon of their transgressions, which, as appears from the Gospel, some publicly confessed. It is clear that the baptism of John was quite different from that of Jesus, of which it was a foreshadowing.

To this arrogant question John meekly made answer: "*I baptize with water, but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not.*" He said substantially: "My baptism is a trifling matter; it is only pouring a little water on the head of him who wills it; it has no virtue to cancel sin, because only the power of the Holy Ghost can cancel sin, and this it has not. My baptism is only of water, a simple rite; it implies an avowal of

sin on the part of the recipient, it is an act of humility, as when one puts ashes on his head; but there is in your midst another who baptizes with water and the Holy Ghost, and my baptism is but a figure of His. Who will administer this baptism? He whose coming I announce to you, the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world."

And here John takes occasion to make known the Messias and to rebuke those who have not yet recognized Him. He who baptizes and in baptizing takes away sin is already come; He is in your midst and you know Him not. Had you sought Him you surely would have found Him, for God always makes known the truth to him who seeks it in simplicity and love. To fulfil his office of precursor and to awake in the members of the embassy a desire to seek the Messias, John goes on speaking of Him. You would know, he says, who is the Messias, the Christ, whom you expect and who is in your midst? *"The same is He that shall come after me,"* that is, "He is born after me," and we know from the Gospel that Jesus Christ was born six months after John. "As man He was born six months after me; but, as you know, He is preferred before me, He is greater than I, and He is above me." In this sentence John clearly states that Jesus was before He became man, that is, He was God. He is so exalted, the Precursor goes on, and such is the reverence due Him that *"I am not worthy to loose the latchet of His shoe."* To loose the latchet of a master's shoe was the duty of slaves. Such was the love of truth and such the instinct of humility in this wonderful man.

It might seem to us that, since these messengers had come on purpose from Jerusalem to find out if John were the Messias or not, and learning from his own lips that he was not the Messias, that the Messias was come and was in their midst, though unknown, they would at once say to John: "Pray tell us, since you know Him, where He is, that we may go straight away and pay Him the homage due Him." It was the most natural thing to do if the motive were even only a rude curiosity. But they did nothing of the sort; so indifferent were they that they did not make a single inquiry which would lead them to know Him for whom the whole nation was yearning. It is a blindness which is an inexplicable mystery and of which we have daily instances under our very eyes. How many among us live forgetful of God, of Jesus Christ, and of their soul? They do not even care to know whether or not God exists, or whether Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. The Church, like John Baptist before her, cries out ceaselessly: "Do penance; Jesus Christ is in your very midst; He awaits you; He wishes to pardon you; go to Him, who is truth and life, to Him who takes away the sins of the world." And what do many, even Christians, do? They turn a deaf ear to the call, they go on in their indifference and sin, in their debaucheries and scandals. Their blindness is even more inexplicable than that of the Jews, because then Jesus Christ had not manifested Himself, nor had He wrought any of the miracles which He afterward wrought and which He continues to work in the Church. May God preserve us always

from falling into so great and so miserable a blindness.

"*These things,*" concludes the Evangelist, "*were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*" This Bethania was not the village where Lazarus and Mary Magdalen and Martha dwelt, but another, on the left bank of the Jordan, where the Precursor sojourned, it may be because there water was convenient wherewith to baptize the crowds which were drawn to him.

My friends, let us always keep before our minds the example of John Baptist, of his sincerity and frankness, his humility and zeal, and let us sincerely endeavor to imitate him and his virtues.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

HOMILY VII

BRETHREN: Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful. But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day, but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything: yet I am not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time, until the Lord come: who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise from God.—EPISTLE, 1 *Cor.* iv. 1-5.

THE five verses, which we read in the Mass of this Sunday, are taken from the fourth chapter of St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians. The faithful of the Church of Corinth, founded by St. Paul, were for many reasons very much disturbed. That there were troubles in the primitive Church should, my friends, cause you no surprise, for wherever there are men there are human passions and human weaknesses. The principal cause of this dissension in the Church of Corinth was the spirit of faction among the faithful, some proclaiming themselves the followers of this priest and some of that. At that time there lived in Corinth a priest named Apollo, a man of much elo-

quence and talent and virtuous withal. Some said: "We are of Apollo;" others said: "We are of Paul;" others said: "We are of Peter;" and finally others, as if to settle the question, said: "We are the disciples of Jesus Christ." These deplorable rivalries, which create divisions, are common enough in our own day. We often see some of the faithful, good and pious persons, it may be, putting the priest in the place of the Church, and attaching themselves to him rather than to the Church; they are followers of a man rather than of Jesus Christ, of the minister rather than of Him whose minister he is.

To remove this disorder the Apostle writes them telling them how ministers of God should be judged. What he says regards both us priests and you lay people, and I beg you to give it your attention.

"*Let a man so account of us as the ministers of God.*" As I have just said there was much ill-feeling among the faithful of Corinth, because of the greater or less esteem in which the sacred ministers were held by different factions, some praising one and some another. "You Corinthians," says the Apostle, "are divided on account of us ministers of Christ. But in the name of Heaven, how are you to judge of us? You can judge of us only as to our office. You should consider, not our talents, our learning, our eloquence, or other natural gifts, but only the office and the power which we possess as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God."

St. Paul means by *dispensers* of the mysteries of God, dispensers of the mysteries of faith, of the

supernatural truths of the Gospel, or of the sacraments, the fountains of grace, and most probably of both taken together.

Here an important truth is presented to us which I wish you to consider attentively. Raised to the high honor of announcing to you the eternal truths that came from the lips of Jesus Christ, and of dispensing the sacraments, those infallible means of divine grace, we should go before you in virtue and holiness of life and make respectable and worthy of reverence the office which we exercise. It is our duty, and wo to us if we fall short of it, for a terrible judgment will await us. But if, unfortunately, our behavior should not correspond to the high office we hold, you, my friends, should not forget that we are still the ministers of Jesus Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. A precious liquid is still precious whether kept in a vessel of crystal or a vessel of gold; and a diamond is still a diamond whether set in fine gold or in a base metal. No matter what may be our qualities of mind and heart, whether we are good or bad, very learned or moderately so, you should always remember that we are the ministers of Christ; and that neither our defects nor our sins can take away or lessen our dignity, simply because it is not ours but Jesus Christ's. Lift your eyes on high, above our poor persons, and fix them on Him who sends us and to whom is due all honor in His representatives, even in the most unworthy.

Our dignity is sublime and godlike, but we are not angels; we are your brothers, subject to the same weaknesses and passions as yourselves; and

if you cast the mantle of your charity over all indiscriminately, why not be charitable with us, since we have need of your charity and, being your brothers, have a claim on it? This truth, frequently forgotten by the laity, should make them more just and charitable toward erring priests.

A fact that I can not understand is this, that as a rule the lapses of laymen are readily forgiven, while those of priests are most severely dealt with. I understand, my friends, that our faults are very much more serious than yours, but this is only a reason why your charity toward us should be greater. How can we profitably exercise our office if you mercilessly expose our faults to the public, which is ever hungering for scandal? If you will not be charitable toward the clergy on their own account, be so at least for the general good.

If the faults that are laid to our charge were even always true; but how often are they studiously exaggerated, and invented simply to cast discredit upon us!

And here is another injustice frequently committed against the clergy. A priest is guilty of a fault, possibly a grave one; what happens? What is said? At once the cry goes up: "See what sort of people those priests and Religious are!" The crime of one becomes the crime of all. Is not this a monstrous injustice? One priest sins, therefore all sin. And why is not the same rule applied to the laity and to every other class of persons? And if the fault of one churchman is imputed to every other churchman, why is not the good one churchman does attributed to all? If one priest does a good and generous deed why is it not said in this

case as in that of a lapse: "See what sort of people those priests and Religious are!" A fault committed by a priest or Religious becomes the fault of all his class; but the merit of a good deed is confined to him who does it. And is this justice?

As to the rest, adds St. Paul, what is required of him who dispenses the goods of another? One thing above all others is required and this is sufficient, namely, that he be faithful, that is, that he fulfil with fidelity the will of his Master. This is the substance. "Therefore," says St. Paul, "look to this in us ministers, us ministers of Christ; see that we fulfil our duty, that we announce the word of God, dispense the sacraments, visit the sick, and discharge the other offices of our ministry; as to the rest it matters little." You have a right to require that a priest be faithful in his duties toward you, but as to anything else it does not concern you, nor have you any right to make it your business.

St. Paul goes on to reinforce the same truth: "*But to me, it is a very small thing to be judged by you or by any human tribunal.*" "You distinguish between minister and minister; you prefer this one to that; but as for me, that gives me no concern; I care not whether your judgments are favorable or unfavorable, nor do I care for any tribunal of earth." The Apostle does not say *human tribunal,* but *man's day,* alluding to the day of the Lord by excellence, or to the day of general judgment.

The Apostle continues: "*I give myself little concern about the judgments of men, because neither do I judge my own self.*" This is language

worthy the Apostle of the Gentiles. He cares not for the praise, he fears not the blame of the world, he does not judge of his own gifts or intentions; he is solely intent on one thing, and that is to fulfil the ministry received from Jesus Christ. This is a perfect model for a priest who, when occasion demands, should challenge the enmity of the wicked and scorn their praise, having ever only one thing in view, namely, the discharge of his duty.

"For I am not conscious to myself of anything." The Apostle here says: "I am not concerned about myself, nor do I even think of judging myself, and as to the exercise of my ministry I have no remorse of conscience." Happy those who after diligently examining themselves can say with the Apostle: "I do not feel that I have any fault on my conscience." It is the best testimony and the sweetest solace a man can have in the midst of the most trying afflictions. Let us see to it that we merit this testimony, which is the reward of the just on earth and gives us strength to stand firm in the bitterest trials of life.

It seems strange that St. Paul should add to the passage, *"I am not conscious to myself of anything,"* these words, *"Yet, I am not hereby justified."* "Because I have no remorse of conscience as to the exercise of my office," St. Paul says, "this does not mean that I am just, and without reproach and holy." No, it is true we do not commit sin unless we know and are conscious that we are committing it; this is quite certain, but it may happen through a culpable negligence that we do not advert to the evil we do, or that we do not call

to mind just now the sin we have committed with full deliberation in the past, and hence the fact that our conscience does not reproach us with these faults is no proof that we are innocent and just, nor will it avail us in the sight of God. It is only too true that there are very many who are given over to every sort of sin and have not the slightest remorse of conscience. Their distracted and reckless manner of life, which has made them callous to every sort of sin, and the inveterate habit of not listening to the voice of conscience, have rendered them insensible to remorse. Can those, because they feel no remorse, be called just? Assuredly not. We may be very sick and still feel no pain; and so also we may be very guilty and feel no remorse, but this will not be sufficient to excuse us before God.

St. Paul teaches us that our own judgment is not a safe one; only God's judgment is unerring and we must commit ourselves to Him: "*He that judgeth me is the Lord.*" This, my friends, is a most comforting truth for all, but especially for those who are placed in office and who are frequently unjustly censured and wrongly judged. How often are fathers and mothers unjustly charged with neglecting the education of their children! Then again, many harbor injurious suspicions against their neighbor; they find fault with this master, with that servant, with the conduct of this priest or pastor, and all the time they judge only from appearances. Frequently those in authority are made the target for the gravest accusations and the foulest calumnies, and they are helpless to defend themselves. These are some of

the bitterest trials and most harrowing agonies of a soul, and God alone knows them. It is truly a comfort in such moments to be able to go into His presence and to open our heart and pour out our soul to Him, saying: "Lord, Thou knowest all; Thou knowest my integrity and my innocence, and I throw myself into Thy arms." *"He that judgeth me is the Lord."* I am convinced that among you who listen to me there is more than one who has at some time felt the need of saying: "God knows I am innocent, and He alone will judge me."

St. Paul draws a conclusion from what he has been saying and applies it to all indiscriminately: *"Therefore judge not before the time, until the Lord come."* We may indeed judge of persons and things in as far as they are revealed to us by word or deed, and we may say that this person or action is good and that bad; but to judge of actions as they are in themselves, and to judge of the minds and the consciences of men is possible to God alone. How often an outward action which we pronounce good, and which is good in its nature, is bad because of the intention of him who does it; and another, which men pronounce to be bad, is good because in doing it there is a good intention? God alone reads the conscience, and therefore we can not judge the thoughts and hearts of others. Only when God shall come to judge us all shall we know men's deeds as they really are: *"He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the heart,"* as the Apostle says. As things are now we see only what appears, and

none of us can know the mind and heart except in so far as they are voluntarily revealed to us by words, and even words are not always a safe means of getting at the truth.

The minds and hearts and consciences of men are shrouded in darkness, and they will not be revealed in full light until the day on which the Supreme Judge will come upon the earth. What will happen then, my friends? Let me illustrate.

Let us fancy that an able artist is shut up in a room, inaccessible to all, at work on a statue; that with marvelous patience he has labored on it for years and years until every detail of it is finished. When the work is finally completed in that impenetrable recess, where he has wrought by the light of a lamp, it is brought forth and exhibited to the public in the midday light of a July sun. You see at once that the statue has been everywhere carefully finished and if there is a chisel mark anywhere it is immediately revealed. And do you not see here in an instant the toil of many, many years, done in secret and unknown to all? This is an image of the divine judgment. During the years of our lives, passed in the darkness of this world, with only the feeble light of reason, aided by the light of faith, we have, in the depths of our conscience, unseen by eye of man, wrought our statue and completed our work, which will endure forever. When the day of judgment comes, the work accomplished in the course of these many years will be seen in the infinite light that radiates from the countenance of Jesus Christ, and all our deeds, whether good or bad, will be made mani-

fest. Then consciences will be laid bare, darkness will pass away, light will shine out, judgment will be passed, and each, as St. Paul says, shall have praise from God, according to his due. It is clear then, my friends, that each of us is now writing in the book of his conscience the sentence which Christ will read and pronounce on the day of judgment, and which we, too, will then read and pronounce. My dear friends, let us look carefully to our thoughts and desires, our words and actions, because all is written down in the book of our conscience, which can not be destroyed, and all will endure for our everlasting glory or our everlasting shame.

HOMILY VIII

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas: the word of the Lord was made unto John the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins, as it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled: and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.—Gospel, *Luke* iii. 1-6.

Such is the Gospel of this Sunday, the fourth and last of Advent. In it mention is made of the mission of John Baptist and of his preaching. During these days the Church, being wholly intent on preparing her children for the coming of Jesus Christ, goes on repeating the words which the Precursor addressed to the Jews to stimulate them to make ready for the coming of the expected Messias. Let us listen to the words of the Precursor, and, more docile than the children of Israel, let us endeavor to put them into practice.

The greatest fact of our religion is the fact of the Incarnation, a fact by which God became man and appeared and lived in the midst of us. All the Old Testament, its rites, its laws, its sacrifices, and its prophecies converge toward and center in this one fact, and to this fact is directed and with it is intimately bound up all the whole Christian economy; it is the foundation-stone of our entire and most holy religion. The fact, then, of the manifestation of the Man-God, of Jesus Christ in Israel, should be certified in the most solemn manner, so as to make impossible any doubt should science later on attempt to obscure or deny it. St. Luke begins the narrative of the public life of Jesus Christ, or the manifestation of the fact of the Incarnation, after the manner of an historian, determining the time when it took place with the greatest possible accuracy. We will let the sacred historian himself speak: "*In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee,*[1] *and Philip,*

[1]Herod Antipas, the murderer of John Baptist.

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his brother,[1] *tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas.''* Here he names Tiberius Cæsar and specifies the year of his reign,[2] namely, the fifteenth. He also names Pontius Pilate, the representative of the emperor in Judea. Herod, who slaughtered the innocents, left his kingdom to his sons, and, as they quarreled among themselves, Augustus divided it into four parts, or tetrarchs, giving one to each, as the Gospel expressly says.[3] After describing with great precision the political state of the kingdom of Israel, St. Luke also refers to the religious government and says that Annas or Ananus and Caiphas ruled as high priests. According to the law of Moses there should be, and in reality there had always been, only one high priest, but at the time of Christ the high priest Annas or Ananus was deposed, through the influence of the Romans, and Caiphas, his son-in-law, chosen in his stead; but whether it was that Annas was rich and powerful,

[1]This Philip was not Philip the husband of Herodias, whom she deserted to marry his half-brother, Herod Antipas. The latter Philip was excluded by his father Herod the Great from all his possessions and lived in a private station, and we can conceive his shame at seeing his wife living publicly with his half-brother.

[2]Augustus associated with himself in the government of the provinces his stepson Tiberius Cæsar; three years after this Augustus died and Tiberius succeeded him. If we date the reign of Tiberius from the death of Augustus, as Tertullian does, this would be the twelfth year of his government; if we date it from his association with Augustus, it would be the fifteenth. The latter is the date given by St. Luke, and correctly, because in reality his reign began when Augustus associated him with himself in the government.

[3]Archelaus was the son of Herod the Great and governed Judea, the principal tetrarch. He was removed by the emperor for his cruelty and driven into exile. The government of Judea was then entrusted to a Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate.

or that Caiphas, who had been chosen in his stead, was his son-in-law, or that the people continued to regard Annas as the lawful high priest, he still exercised his office together with his son-in-law Caiphas. Hence St. Luke says that at that time there were two high priests, simply giving the fact without approving it.

St. Luke wished thus correctly to name the civil and religious rulers of the time, in order, first, to show that his narrative of the events regarding Jesus Christ was historically accurate; next to make clear that civil rule had passed from the hands of the Hebrews, and that the prophecy of Jacob had been fulfilled; and further, because the persons named were all intimately connected with the life of Christ, which he was writing.

The civil and religious affairs of Israel being as narrated, what happened? "*The word of the Lord,*" as St. Luke says, "*came to John, the son of Zachary, in the desert.*" We know from Scripture and tradition that John Baptist from his very infancy was filled with the Holy Ghost and that while still a youth he had withdrawn to the desert and lived an austere life, as we have said elsewhere. The manner of life embraced by John Baptist was not a new one; we find many illustrious examples of it among the prophets and among those known as the School of the Prophets. John lived in the desert, and his life was one of silence, penance, and prayer, yet he was certainly not unknown to many of his fellow-countrymen. But up to this time his voice had not been heard, and he would seem to have shunned all intercourse with men. Then, that is, in the fifteenth year of

the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, God made known to him either by interior inspiration, or by the ministry of an angel, or in some other way, that the time had come for him to enter upon his mission, and, obeying the voice of God, John came forth from the heart of the desert, where he abode, "*and came into all the country about the Jordan.*" The Jordan descending from Libanus, traverses a great part of eastern Palestine, feeds the Lake of Genesereth or Tiberias and empties into the Dead Sea.

So John coming out from the desert appeared along the Jordan, passing through the towns and villages on either shore and preaching to the multitudes that went out to hear him. And what was the burden of John's preaching? In the Gospel of St. Luke and in the other Gospels we get an idea of the truths which the Precursor announced, and in the passage read to you the Evangelist sums up the preaching of the Baptist in one short sentence: "*He preached the baptism of penance and the remission of sins.*" He preached the necessity of doing penance in order to obtain the pardon of sin, and a token of this penance was the baptism which he administered in the Jordan.

There are two sorts of penance, my friends; interior penance or the penitence of the heart, and exterior, which consists in some act of mortification, such as fasting, abstinence, and vigils. The interior is the soul of the exterior, and without it the exterior is worthless. Penitence of the heart is so necessary, that without it it is impossible to obtain the pardon of sin, and without it even the omnipotent God could not condone sin. Sin comes

from the heart or the will; the heart conceives it and begets it, and it is therefore necessary that the heart should reject it, cast it out, and utterly destroy what it has so sinfully willed. Such is interior penitence or the sorrow of the mind, which destroys sin and reconciles the soul with God. There can be and often is interior penitence without acts of exterior penance, as when the penitent can not perform such acts or has neither the time nor the strength to do so; thus the thief on the cross obtained pardon though his penitence was only that of the heart.

There may also be acts, and great ones, of exterior penance, such as fastings, scourgings, and almsgiving, without penitence of the heart, as in the case of the Pharisees, according to the words of Our Lord. All exterior penance is worthless if the heart is not repentant, and hence the prophet cried out to the Jews: "*Rend your hearts and not your garments.*"[1] It is best, then, to unite interior penitence and exterior penance, and during these days we should endeavor to practise the first by detesting sin and getting ready for a good confession; and the second by at least observing the double law of fast and abstinence, enjoined by Holy Mother Church.

The baptism of John, as I have already said, had not the power to take away sin; it was an act of humility, a token of interior penitence, and a preparation for the baptism of Jesus Christ; our penitence, united with confession, is a second baptism and by its inherent virtue takes away all sin.

My friends, crowds went out to the Jordan to

[1]Joel ii. 13.

receive the baptism of John and thus prepare themselves to receive the Messias, whose coming he announced as at hand; and we during these days can go to the blessed laver of confession much more easily than they went to receive the baptism of John, and thus prepare ourselves holily to receive Jesus Christ into our hearts and joyfully to celebrate His nativity.

St. Luke quotes the words of the prophet Isaias, who five centuries before had spoken of John and of his preaching, saying: "*A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.*" Certainly the Precursor, into whose mouth Isaias put these words, had no idea of speaking of material ways and paths, but if I mistake not, his meaning was this: "When a great personage, such as a king, is expected, the people set themselves to put in order the roads over which he is to pass; they clear away all obstructions, they straighten and clean them; so also you Jews should put in order, not the material roads, but your minds and hearts; you should also clear them of all obstructions, make them straight and clean, so that you may worthily receive the Saviour of the world."

As in the material order the straight way is that which ought to be followed, so also in the spiritual and moral order, he who lives according to reason and faith is said to *walk in the straight way, to live uprightly,* and is called an *upright man.* This is both the language of Scripture and that of common usage. So, also, he who swerves from the rules of reason and faith is said to walk in the crooked way. Truth and faith, and as a conse-

quence virtue, which is truth and faith in practice, may be represented as a perfectly straight line, and so also may error and vice be represented as a line more or less curved or crooked. When, therefore, the Precursor cries out: "*Make straight the ways of the Lord,*" he means for us to give up error, to flee vice, to abandon sin, and to return to the straight way, the way of truth and virtue. Now what is badly twisted can not be straightened without an effort and without pain. If a foot or an arm is dislocated the surgeon can not reset it without giving pain, and the pain will be in proportion to the gravity of the dislocation. It is the same in the moral order; it is impossible without sorrow to leave off sin, to reform evil habits and reduce the rebellious passions to obedience; sorrow is a necessary condition of a return to grace and of a reconciliation with God. This is why the Precursor couples together penance and making straight the way of the Lord: "*Do penance; make straight the way of the Lord.*"

Isaias, as cited by St. Luke, goes on: "*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough way plain.*" This is but a development of the idea expressed above: "*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.*" This metaphorical and spirited language of the prophet likely means that the proud and the haughty, before being filled with God's grace, must abase and humble themselves and know and feel their own miseries. As you know, water does not remain on lofty heights, where it is beaten by wind and storm and dried up by the heat of the

sun; it runs down into the valleys and clothes them with golden harvests and green meadows. Substantially, Isaias in these words said what Our Lord later on said in the more simple language of the people: "*Whoso exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoso humbles himself shall be exalted.*"

At this season He who is rightly called the Highest humbled Himself even to be made man, a child, the lowliest and poorest of children, and He was born in a stable. Let us also, then, humble ourselves, or rather acknowledge our misery, our nothingness, and then shall we have the joy of seeing Him by a living faith and of growing into His likeness.

Sunday within the Octave of Christmas

HOMILY IX

BRETHREN: As long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father: so we also, when we were children, were serving under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also, through God.—EPISTLE, *Gal.* iv. 1-7.

THE few sentences which you have just heard, written by St. Paul to the faithful of Galatia, wonderfully illustrate the sublime and beautiful mystery which we are celebrating during this season. The Son of God made man, this is the mystery of the Nativity, the octave of which we are still celebrating. Now what is the end and chief fruit of this mystery? Why did the Son of God make Himself man? In order, says St. Augustine and all the Fathers with one voice, that men might become as God; and St. Paul in the text just read, adds, in order that men might become the children of God. With reason, then, the Church invites us to meditate upon the words of the Apostle just

read, since they set forth the practical fruit of the Incarnation and of the Nativity. You will kindly listen while I explain them.

The scope of the whole Letter of St. Paul to the Galatians is to show that the Law of Moses must come to an end and be replaced by the Law of Jesus Christ; the Law of Moses, says St. Paul, was as a pedagogue who led the way to Jesus Christ; when He was come the office of pedagogue had no longer any reason to be and ceased naturally. The better to illustrate his meaning St. Paul takes a parallel case from civil law, which is an evolution from the natural law.

He says: "*As long as the heir is a child he differs in nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father.*" Here is a child, he is the heir of his father and therefore truly the owner of all his possessions, but as long as he is a child and a minor he differs in no way from a servant; he must obey his preceptor and leave the administration of his property to guardians and attorneys; and though the real owner, he must continue in this state of dependence until the expiration of the time fixed by law and by his father, when he will enter into the full and free exercise of his rights as son. During this interval there is no difference between him and a servant, except that the state of servitude is lasting and that of a minor only temporary. We Hebrews, thus reasons St. Paul, as long as we were under the Law of Moses, and we Gentiles, before the Gospel, were as children, helpless to do anything; we were in bondage under "*the elements of the world*"; we

were bound by the weighty and minute prescriptions of the Law of Moses; we were slaves to the superstitions of the Gentiles;[1] we were as children, who before they enter upon the higher studies, learn the alphabet. In a word, all that time that intervened between Adam and Christ was a time of preparation; the whole human race was a learner and a minor, awaiting the time when it would be emancipated and, through the intervention of Jesus Christ, acquire full liberty over itself, casting off the swaddling clothes of the Synagogue and the superstitions and errors of Paganism.

And when did this emancipation of the human race take place? *"When the fulness of time was come God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."* What is meant by this completion or fulness of time, as the Latin text has it? A thing is full when it is complete or perfect; and the fulness of time is come when the time is ripe and events are accomplished. When the time foretold by the prophets had arrived and all things were in readiness, the Father sent His Son, that is, the Son of God was made man. Do not fancy that God the Father *sent* His Son, as an earthly father might send his; no, God the Father can not be separated from the Son, their nature being identical, any more than we can separate our thought from our mind. He does not send the Son

[1] There were some truths, theoretical and practical, in Paganism common to Judaism, and hence in the words *"Elements of the world"* is included whatever was good and true in Paganism. Clement of Alexandria said that the law was given to the Jews, as a means of going to God and to the Gentiles' philosophy. See St. Paul, *Rom.* ii. 14 *et seq.*

by physical movement, *this being impossible in God;* He does not send as if giving a command; God the Father sends the Son, who has one will with Himself, by having Him assume human nature, so that He who is God eternal and unchangeable began also to be man. The Son of the eternal Father became man by taking human nature of a woman. And here note that St. Paul says that Jesus Christ took human nature of a woman to point out that man had no part in this, and that Jesus Christ was therefore born of a virgin. The Son of God was born of a virgin and was made subject to the law, that is, the Law of Moses. Jesus Christ, even as man, was not subject to the Mosaic law, being above all law; but though not subject to it, He voluntarily submitted to it and scrupulously observed all its prescriptions from the circumcision to the celebration of the pasch.

And why did Jesus Christ, who was under no sort of obligation to do so, submit Himself to the Law of Moses? St. Paul gives the answer: "*That He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*" Jesus Christ took upon Him the whole burden of the Mosaic law for two reasons, that we might be freed from that law, which was a law of slaves; and that we might acquire all the rights of adopted sons. The Mosaic law was a law of fear; many of its transgressions were punished with death; it regarded the body rather than the spirit and its rewards were of this world; and St. Peter calls it a yoke "*which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear.*"[1] Jesus Christ took

[1]Acts xv. 10.

the burden of this law upon Himself, as He took the burden of sin; He put an end to it forever, and in its place substituted His own law. "*The law of the adoption of sons,*" or the Gospel. By nature we are creatures of God and therefore His servants, and the children of Israel were dealt with as servants, being terribly punished whenever they strayed from the path of duty. By the New Law, introduced by Jesus Christ, we are raised to the dignity of sons of God, and hence our motive of action should be, not fear, but love.

We are children of God by adoption. You know what adoption means and what are the rights which it carries with it. A man chooses a youth, no matter whom, declares him to be his son, gives him his name, keeps him in his own home, treats him and loves him as if he were his natural child, and, dying, he makes him heir to all his possessions. Such is an adopted child, and such the dignity which we owe to Jesus Christ. Without any sort of merit on our part He chose us out from the midst of men, in Baptism He made us His sons, He received us into His Church, into His own household and kingdom; He loves us as sons, He makes us sharers in all the spiritual goods of His Church, and He will give us an everlasting heritage in heaven. Such is the meaning of being adopted sons of God.

But this is not all, my friends. Our dignity as sons of God implies relations between God and us incomparably more intimate than those that exist between an adopted son and the father who has adopted him, and to this point I call your attention. A youth becomes the son of another by

adoption and he is regarded as if he were his natural son and has the same rights. But I ask you, has the father who adopted him transmitted to him any of his nature or personality? Absolutely none. This father loves his adopted son with a very deep and sincere love, he calls him his son, he lavishes favors on him, and he gives him wealth without end; still that young man will never be the son of his adopted father except by authority of law and in the common estimation. In his veins there will never run a single drop of the blood of the man who adopted him; the fact will always remain that he derived his life from another, and that his true father is not and can not be his father by adoption, and this his looks, his moral nature, his inclinations and tastes, his character and habits will clearly show.

The adoption which we have received from God is quite a different thing. In adopting us He has given us what is most intimate to Himself; He has made us sharers of His Spirit and of His very life. St. Paul says so in so many words: "*And because you are sons He hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.*" The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the Holy Ghost Himself, the substantial love of the Father and the Son, and Jesus Christ pours this spirit into our souls by the grace which sanctifies us in Baptism and which is augmented in Confirmation and in all the other sacraments, but particularly in the Blessed Eucharist. And what is this grace, this gift of the Holy Ghost? It is a force that comes out from God Himself, that takes possession of the soul, penetrates and permeates it through and through, beautifies it, trans-

forms it, and makes it like unto God.[1] Iron thrust into the fire is wholly penetrated by the fire, transformed by it, and still it continues to be iron. This is an image of a soul adorned with the grace of God. It is intimately united to God, it is made beautiful with the beauty of God, as the flower is made beautiful by the light of the sun; it receives into itself an influx of the very life of God, as the twig receives its life from the root and stem of the vine; by grace the soul, still remaining a created soul, participates of the divine nature and bears on itself the lineaments and the likeness of God, and feels that it has a full right to say to God: "Our Father!" Oh, yes, as St. John says, not only may we call ourselves the sons of God but we are such in reality: *That we may be called and may be the sons of God.* My friends, what a dignity—what a greatness! Sons of God! Therefore being sons we ought to respect Him, obey Him, honor Him in our lives, put all trust in Him, love Him tenderly and above all things else.

HOMILY X

At that time Joseph and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, were wondering at those things, which were spoken concerning Him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, His mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a proph-

[1]Here habitual and sanctifying, not actual, grace is meant.

etess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the Temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord; and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in Him.—Gospel, *Luke* ii. 33-40.

The Gospel of this Sunday treats wholly of the child Jesus; it speaks of His presentation in the Temple, of how He was made known through Simeon and Anna, and of His going back to Nazareth; it is, in fact, a supplement to the mystery of the Nativity. As the text is somewhat lengthy I shall at once begin the explanation of it.

"*Joseph and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, were wondering at the things which were spoken concerning Him.*" To rightly understand these words it will be necessary to go back a little to where Simeon, enlightened from on high, recognized in the child whom His Mother carried in her arms the expected Saviour of the world, and uttered those noble words of the canticle, which is called by his name. In this canticle the holy old man foretold the conversion of the Gentiles and the glory that would come to the heavenly child. Hearing this Joseph and Mary marveled, not that

Mary was ignorant of the future glory of Jesus, but she was amazed to hear it so clearly foretold by the old man and in that place. Still neither Joseph nor Mary said anything; they were silent, and amazed and thanked God in their hearts.

It is important, my friends, to note these words of the Evangelist: *"Joseph and Mary, the Mother of Jesus."* Here you will notice that the Evangelist, as regards the origin of Jesus, carefully distinguishes between Joseph and Mary, and while he only names Joseph, as if he were a stranger, he expressly says: *"Mary, the Mother of Jesus."* In these words he clearly expresses the Catholic dogma, according to which we believe that Jesus Christ had not an earthly father, that the Virgin alone gave Him His human life, and that she is His true Mother.

Mary the Mother of Jesus, and Mary the Mother of God, are one and the same, because, since in Jesus there is only one Person, the Son of God, and since Mary is the Mother of Jesus, it is clear that she is truly the Mother of God, though Jesus as the Son of God did not derive His being from her. Our mother did not give us our soul, which God alone created, but only our body, and since each of us is one sole person, made up of two substances, soul and body united together, our mother is said to be and truly is our mother. Similarly, Mary is the true mother of Jesus, the God-Man, because she truly generated Him in His human nature, which He derived from her.

Simeon, having given thanks to God for having granted him the favor of recognizing in the child the Messias, blessed Joseph and Mary, reciting

over them the sacred benediction prescribed by the law, and then turning to Mary, said: "*Behold, this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel.*" His meaning was that this child was come for the salvation of all, because He wished to save all; but contrary to His will, He would be to some a rock of scandal, and the occasion of their fall and eternal ruin. Those among the children of Israel who saw Him, heard His teaching, and in a spirit of humble obedience believed, were saved; those who saw Him with proud disdain, who contemned Him and spurned His teaching, were in their turn thrust away and lost. Jesus Christ was for Israel, and will ever be for all men, the cause of their salvation or the occasion of their ruin. He is like light that is a joy to a healthy eye and a torment to a sore one; though light of its very nature should only rejoice and not torment the eye; if the light does torment it, it is not the fault of the light, but of the soreness of the eye itself.

Our condition, my friends, is such that if we are not saved by Him, we shall be eternally condemned by Him. From him who has received more, more is expected; from him who has received less, less is expected. Now we have known Jesus Christ, we have received from Him all manner of blessings; wo to us if we do not show a responsive spirit. A fall from a great height is fatal, and such will be our fall, if, raised to so great an eminence by Jesus Christ, we should lose our hold upon Him.

"*Jesus,*" Simeon goes on, "*is set for a sign that shall be contradicted by many.*" This proph-

ecy was fulfilled and is daily being fulfilled under our very eyes. Is not Jesus Christ Himself and is not the Church, His mouthpiece and organ, a sign and a mark for contradiction? Some believe in Him, some do not; some obey Him, some refuse to obey Him; some bless Him, some blaspheme Him; some love Him, some care nothing for Him and even hate Him ferociously. As Jesus Christ was treated during the days of His mortal life, so has He been treated in every age since, down to our own; and so also with His Church, which by some is obeyed, respected, and loved as a mother, and by others disobeyed, despised, and hated as an enemy.

"*And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts shall be revealed.*" Mary can not be separated from Jesus any more than can the flower be separated from the stem, or the rivulet from the spring, and hence the joys and the sorrows of the Son were the joys and the sorrows of the Mother. Jesus will be a mark for the wrath and the rage of the Synagogue, which will one day nail Him to the cross. He will be the Man of sorrows and the Prince of martyrs; and so also will Mary suffer an agony with Him and for Him, and she will be the Woman of sorrows and the Queen of martyrs. Jesus will be tortured in body and soul, Mary will suffer only in soul indeed, but her martyrdom will be such that Simeon, to express it, used these words: "*And thy own soul a sword shall pierce,*" and this sword was driven into her heart at the very instant that she became a mother, because from that instant she had, if not a vivid apprehension, certainly a clear

and certain knowledge of all that Jesus Christ must suffer, and hence the martyrdom was continuous throughout her whole life. It is a law from which no follower of Christ is or can be exempt, that suffering is the measure of exalted virtue and perfection of life, and they are more like to Jesus Christ in holiness who walk nearest to Him in the way of the cross.

When Jesus ended His life on the cross, a mark for the hatred of His enemies, and Mary stood in an agony at His feet, then *"out of many hearts thoughts were revealed,"* then appeared the horrid impiety and the ferocious cruelty of the Synagogue.

Joseph and Mary were still in the Temple, possibly sorrowfully thinking over the prophecy of Simeon, when a woman, whose name was Anna, that is, *grace,* stood before them. She belonged to the tribe of Aser, and must have been well known in Jerusalem as one endowed with the prophetic spirit, since St. Luke calls her a prophetess. After seven years of married life Anna became and remained a widow and was now eighty-four years of age. After her husband's death *"she departed not from the Temple, by fastings and prayers, serving God night and day."* We know that certain pious women, dwelling nearby, served the Temple and lived after the manner of Religious. Anna was likely one of these women and gave her life to the service of the Temple and to prayer; but what most astonishes us is that a woman of that advanced age should have added fastings to her prayers. This woman is certainly worthy of our admiration, but on the other hand what a re-

buke she is to us. After a long life of innocence at the age of eighty-four, she voluntarily subjects her body to fastings and mortifications! And we, still young and in the full tide of life, are so indulgent to our passions; and if we do not wholly ignore the laws of fast and abstinence, we find it irksome to observe them.

"Anna, at the same hour coming in, confessed the Lord, and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel."

Anna, enlightened from on high, as Simeon had been a little while before, recognized the babe as the Messias and the Saviour of the world, and as such she spoke of Him to those who were in the Temple. It pleased God to make known the mystery of the Incarnation and the expected Saviour to two persons, Simeon and Anna, the one a man, the other a woman, because these two were prepared by a religious and saintly life to recognize Him, and because both, being venerable by age and still more by virtue, could serve as apostles in announcing Him to the people and in stirring up their faith. Thus God in His goodness never fails to make known the truth to those who are rightly disposed. The shepherds and the magi, Simeon and Anna, Zachary and Elizabeth, were all serviceable and powerful instruments in the hands of God to make Jesus known while He was still an infant. And yet how many of the Hebrews took advantage of this most special grace? Very few, indeed, as the Gospel bears witness.

"And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."

After hearing the wonderful things that Simeon and Anna spoke concerning Jesus, Joseph and Mary went back to the little village of Nazareth and to their humble home, leaving it to Providence to bring to maturity His own hidden purposes.[1]

And now we are at the last verse of this Sunday's Gospel. *"And the child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom; and the grace of God was in Him."* To some these words may seem difficult to understand, and contrary to what we should hold concerning the perfection of Jesus Christ; and yet, if properly explained, there is not a shadow of a difficulty in them.

It is of faith, and therefore we must believe it, that Jesus Christ from the first instant of His conception in the womb of His Mother, was filled with all knowledge, and virtue, and holiness, so that it was impossible for His blessed soul to increase in these by one iota. This is a necessary consequence of the nature of the immediate and personal union of the divine Word with the humanity

[1]Interpreters have been at great pains to reconcile the apparent discrepancy in this place between the Gospel of St. Luke and that of St. Matthew. The latter speaks of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, then he narrates the coming of the magi, and, immediately after, the flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth (chap. ii), which must have taken place three years later, since the death of Herod did not occur until two years after the slaughter of the Innocents. St. Luke, having narrated the birth of Jesus, describes His presentation and the purification of His Mother in the Temple, which took place forty days after the birth, and forthwith transports the Holy Family to Nazareth. The most obvious explanation is that St. Luke, inasmuch as he was certainly familiar with the Gospel of St. Matthew, omitted to record the coming of the magi and the flight into Egypt, and at once carries us forward to the time of the return from Egypt and speaks of the Holy Family as settled in Nazareth. Hence this thirty-ninth verse of St. Luke is perfectly parallel with the twenty-third verse of the second chapter of St. Matthew.

which the Word assumed, and in assuming filled it with all the knowledge, and holiness, and perfection of which it was capable. Jesus Christ, then, as man, in the first instant of His conception, was as perfect, neither more nor less, as He was at the last moment of His mortal life. Why, then, does the Gospel say that He increased in wisdom and grace? He did not increase in wisdom and grace really and in the strict sense of these words, but only in the sense that as He gradually grew in years, He showed externally an increase of wisdom and grace; that is, He measured the manifestation of these excellences so as to make it correspond with His age. Just as in the physical order He was first a babe, then a child, next a youth, and finally a man, with all His virile force fully developed; so in the spiritual and supernatural order He willed that the outward manifestation of His grace and holiness should be progressive and correspond to His years.

My friends, the sun never changes; it is ever the same and ever equally sends forth its rays and diffuses its heat; but we see both its light and its heat go on increasing in intensity from dawn until midday. So also with Jesus Christ; His holiness and wisdom were ever the same and what seemed an increase in them was only their fuller manifestation.[1]

Grace and wisdom and virtue in Jesus Christ could not have any real increase; the increase was

[1]It is indeed true that in the last verse of this chapter St. Luke says: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and man," which would seem to contradict our interpretation. But it should be observed that in Jesus Christ there was a twofold knowledge, one intimate and proper to Himself, and the

only apparent and seemed such to the eyes of men; but with us it is different; they can and ought to gain a real increase day by day until we shall have attained perfection by copying our pattern, Jesus Christ, into our lives. Now when we examine our life and conduct can we say that we have gone on increasing in virtue from year to year? Alas, it may be we shall be obliged to own that we were more pious and virtuous in youth than in manhood and old age. This would be a shameful avowal. My dear friends, let us after the manner of Jesus, go on increasing in wisdom and in the grace of God, as we grow in years.

other experimental, or the knowledge of experience; this latter added nothing to the former. Jesus Christ could be said to advance in the knowledge of experience, but not in the knowledge that was intimate and proper to Himself, which was infused in the very act of the Incarnation.

First Sunday after Epiphany

HOMILY XI

I BESEECH you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be reformed in the newness of your mind; that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. For I say, by the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety, and according as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* xii. 1-5.

SUCH are the first five verses of the twelfth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In the preceding chapters the great apostle reasons profoundly and at length on the grace of God, and the freeness of His gifts, adding that no one should boast because of those he has received; then in these verses he comes down to practical life and touches upon truths most necessary to every Christian, no matter what his state or condition. You will kindly listen to them and meditate upon them.

"*I beseech you by the mercy of God, that you*

present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service.''

There are two qualities conspicuous in the Letters of St. Paul, which, while they seem opposed one to the other, are admirably combined in him; namely, strength of language and tenderness of affection, the fearlessness of an apostle and the heart of a father. As an apostle he might command; but instead he prefers to beseech and supplicate, calling his brethren his spiritual children. He beseeches and supplicates by the mercy of God, the highest, sweetest and most precious of all motives, and by the tender love God bears us, which is so characteristically a divine attribute. I beg you, my friends, to note the difference between human or civil, and religious or sacred authority. The former has to do with external actions and is enforced by power; the latter enters into the sanctuary of the conscience, rests upon persuasion, and takes on the character of paternal authority. Hence sacred and ecclesiastical authority, although true authority and far superior to civil or human, as a rule shrinks from force or compulsion or the exercise of power, in this obeying the words of Christ and of His first vicar, who warns us against exercising authority after the manner of kings, who domineer, telling us that we are all brothers and that he who commands should be as he who obeys. St. Paul, who was imbued with this spirit of Christ, writes: *''Brethren, I beseech you.''* The Apostle does not command, he entreats. This sublime and beautiful idea of authority was brought on earth by Jesus Christ.

My friends, would it not be wise and saintly in

us to follow the example of the Apostle and beseech and entreat our brethren whom we might command? Possibly if we did we should be more promptly and cheerfully obeyed.

What does the Apostle beseech and entreat his brethren to do? He beseeches them to offer their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. Many sacrifices, such as oxen, lambs, and other animals were offered among the Hebrews and also among the Gentiles. The Apostle protests that such are not the sacrifices we should offer to God; offer, he says, your very bodies. Must we, then, kill our bodies to give honor to God? No, that is not necessary, and to do so would be a crime; our sacrifice, in contrast with those of old which pleased not God, must be a living sacrifice. There is no need of wounding or killing the body to offer this sacrifice, but we must wound and, if possible, kill the passions, which find lodgment in the body. We must kill pride and avarice, luxury and gluttony, anger and all other wicked tendencies that war against the spirit, and then we shall have offered a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

There have been, and there are still, some who misinterpret certain passages of Holy Scripture and say that to adore God in spirit and in truth, the outward acts of the body are of no avail and may be a sort of hindrance to the worship of the spirit. St. Paul says in the text that we should present our bodies a sacrifice to God; therefore an external and material service also is pleasing to Him. And such is the truth, for is it not united to the spirit and inseparable from it? And how are the body and its acts offered up except by the

spirit? And is not the body also God's gift? Why, then, should it not be offered up to Him, thus, if I may so say, giving Him back His own gift? Certainly, He wants first of all and chiefly the sacrifice of the heart and of the will, but not without the sacrifice of the body, which must follow that of the spirit.

But this is not all; the Apostle demands another sacrifice, the "*sacrifice of a reasonable service.*" What is this reasonable service or sacrifice? We have a body and within that body we have wayward passions; above the body is the soul, and the highest and supremest faculty of the soul is the reason, of which we are so jealous and so proud. We must also sacrifice the reason to God, for it, too, is His gift. But how? By faith. When the mysteries of faith are presented to us, our reason protests; it is irritated and disposed to rebel, and because it does not comprehend them it feels a sense of humiliation and annoyance. But mysteries are imposed upon us by God, who speaks to us through the Church; we should accept them and believe them with the utmost certainty, though we can not comprehend them as they are. By a supreme effort and borne up by grace we say to almighty God: "I do not comprehend what Thou layest upon me to believe; I submit my mind; I make a sacrifice of it; I believe." This sacrifice of the mind, following that of the passions and the will, is the noblest man can offer,[1] and we make it every time we say: "I believe."

[1]These words of St. Paul are ordinarily taken to mean that our service, or our faith, is reasonable. Certainly, nothing can be truer than this, for since the motives of divine revelation are evident, our assent to it is reasonable. But if we examine the text

"And be not conformed to this world." Having offered ourselves body and soul to God, it is impossible, the Apostle says, to give ourselves to this world. By the word *age,* used in text, St. Paul means here, as elsewhere, the world with its passions and corruptions. The historian Tacitus uses the word *age* in the same sense in which St. Paul uses it, saying: *Corrumpere et corrumpi saeculum vocatur.* "What means the world but to corrupt and to be corrupted!" A splendid definition! No, we will not be votaries of the world, nor will we approve its maxims, nor follow its fashions, which are condemned by Jesus Christ; but *"we will be reformed in the newness of our mind."* By these words St. Paul entreats us to regulate our lives interiorly and exteriorly according to the principles taught us by Jesus Christ in the Gospel. The new man Adam was just and innocent; new, because immediately created by God; but this new man was sadly changed and deeply corrupted by sin; Jesus Christ came to remake him, to renew him in Himself, illuminating his mind with the light of truth and creating in his heart a new spirit, the spirit of grace.

My brethren, are we like unto the world, or are we conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ? Our works will give us an infallible answer; they will tell us whether we are votaries of the world or disciples of Jesus Christ.

If we have a firm hold on the principles and truths preached by Jesus Christ, the second

closely we shall find that this is not the sense of the words. What St. Paul means is that we shall make of our bodies, of our souls, and of our minds a sacrifice to God.

Adam, we shall be able, St. Paul says, *"to prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God."* It will be easy to ascertain by the light of faith and of the eternal truths taught us by Jesus Christ, what is the will of God with regard to each of us; we shall know clearly what is good, what is better, and what is perfect or best, for this seems to be what St. Paul means by these three words: *the good, the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.* The Lord does not ask the same equally from all; as in the natural order there is a variety of gifts, so also in the supernatural or the order of grace, there is the same variety. Some are called to live in the world, others to live in the cloister; some are called to sanctify themselves in the midst of wealth and honors, in the exercise of power and authority, others in poverty, humiliation, and obedience; for God is the master and dispenser of His gifts and His is the right to determine the kind of life each shall lead, and it is for us to see and accept His will and to set ourselves generously and courageously to carry it out.

St. Paul goes on to say: *"By the grace of God that is given me, I say to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise."* There is a diversity of graces and a diversity of callings which God dispenses as He wills; to me He has given the grace and the ministry of the apostolate, and in virtue of this ministry committed to me I command you all and several without distinction to do what? *"Not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety, and according as God has divided unto every one the measure of faith."* The interpreta-

tions of these words of St. Paul are many and various, and while all are good in themselves, that given by St. Basil and St. Ambrose seems to me the most natural and the best. The graces of God are various and diverse, and various and diverse are the offices which He entrusts to men; let each one, then, confine himself to his own proper office and guard against interfering with that of another.[1] Hence the words: "*According to the measure of faith,*" must be taken in a wide sense, as if the Apostle would say: Let every one keep within the limits of his gifts and his duties, whatever they may be.

This lesson, my friends, has many practical applications. God, who is wisdom itself and order itself, wills that everything shall be supremely orderly; but that everything may be thus orderly, that the earth may be an image of heaven and men may be like unto God, it is essential that every one shall keep his own place and discharge his own duties. When, my friends, does a piece of machinery work smoothly? When every single piece which belongs to it is in its proper place and does its proper work. Thus a family, a parish, a society gets on well when each single member is at his post, stays there, and discharges the duties of his office. Let us, my dear friends, try to put in practice the teaching of the Apostle and we shall be exemplary Christians and good citizens.

[1]It is not unusual to hear these words of St. Paul: "*Not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety,*" taken to mean that our studies and our knowledge and the like must be restricted; certainly, even in these moderation and control are necessary, but the phrase of the Apostle is general, and implies a proper measure and temperance in all things, as well as knowledge, and not in this alone.

To illustrate this teaching, at once so beautiful and so natural, the Apostle uses a similitude quite common with him and easily understood by any one of even limited intelligence. "*As in the body,*" he says, "*we have many members, but all the members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*"

See the human body, says St. Paul, it is only one body, but its members are many and various; there are eyes, ears, and tongue, head, hands, and feet, and so on; and each member has its own special office, of seeing, or hearing, or speaking; of ruling, or working, or walking; one body and many members, but these do not interfere the one with the other; the eyes do not try to hear, nor the ears to see, nor the tongue to listen; nor does the head obey, nor the hands walk, nor do the feet do the work of the hands; each member does its own work *and the whole man moves on harmoniously.* Thus, St. Paul reasons, should it be in the body of Jesus Christ or the Church. Each Christian should regard himself, not as one isolated and apart, but as a member of one and the same body, and he should regard the common good as his own; then no one will invade the rights of another and we shall have in the Church, in the family, and in the individual the most perfect order, and with order peace, charity, and all the material well-being possible on this earth.

Happy would it be for the family, for the parish, and happy for society in its entirety if the great law set forth by the Apostle were faithfully observed.

HOMILY XII

When Jesus was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem seeking Him. And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers. And seeing Him, they wondered. And His mother said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us? behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought Me? did you not know that I must be about My Father's business? And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject to them. And His mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.—Gospel, *Luke* ii. 42-52.

We have just celebrated the Epiphany or the manifestation of Our Lord to the magi, and to-day the Church reminds us of His second manifestation in the Temple of Jerusalem, in the midst of the Doctors of the Law, where He permitted a ray of that divine wisdom to escape Him, which

later on He dispensed so lavishly and so marvelously among the people. The particular circumstances attaching to this fact are highly instructive for all, but more especially for you, parents, and for you, dear children, and I beg you to listen to them.

The Hebrews had but one Temple, the great Temple of Jerusalem, on Mount Moria. All the people were obliged by law to go to this Temple on the three principal feasts of the year, namely, the Pasch, which commemorated the liberation from Egyptian bondage and always fell on the day of the full moon of March; Pentecost, which commemorated the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, fifty days after the Pasch; and the Scenopegia or the Tabernacles, which commemorated the dwelling in the desert in tents, and fell in autumn. Women and children under twelve years of age were dispensed from this law. Still it was a pious custom for women, and for children who had not completed their twelfth year, occasionally to make this pilgrimage.

Joseph and Mary, according to custom, went yearly to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pasch, and Jesus, when He had completed His twelfth year, went with them. The Pasch that year, it has been computed, fell on the twenty-second or the twenty-third of March.

And here I may make a trite, but useful and important observation. Joseph observed the law with exactness; Mary being a woman, and therefore not bound by the law, and Jesus, being the God-Man, and hence above all law, nevertheless conformed to it from a profoundly religious spirit and to give an example to us all. Parents, Joseph

and Mary teach you by their example that you should go to the house of God to fulfil your religious duties and to teach your children by your good example. And you, children, should keep before your eyes the example of Jesus Christ, who when twelve years of age went with Joseph and His Mother to the Temple to adore the majesty of His Father.

And here is another observation that may be profitable to all. The distance from Nazareth to Jerusalem is about eighty miles; the roads were bad, the country for the most part mountainous and infested with bands of highwaymen, who waylaid, robbed, and murdered travelers. The journey then was a very trying one and not exempt from danger; still Joseph, Mary, and Jesus did not shrink from making it. We have the Church at our very door, in which is offered up daily the Holy Sacrifice, of which those offered in the Temple of Jerusalem were but faint figures; there, too, the Gospel is preached and the sacraments administered, and still we are negligent about going to it and make nothing of offending God by frequently violating the grave precept which obliges us to assist at Mass on Sunday and feast-days of obligation.

What happened at Jerusalem? "*The child Jesus remained there and His parents knew it not.*" Do not think it strange that this should have happened without the slightest fault of Joseph and Mary. First of all we may take it for granted that Jesus so arranged things that Joseph and His Mother should not advert to His remaining in Jerusalem. But aside from this the fact is

easily explained when we consider how these large crowds of people made the journey. They went in bands or companies of friends, or townsfolk, as we should say, the men separated from the women and the children generally with the women. In the crowd and confusion at the moment of starting, Mary naturally thought that Jesus was with Joseph, and Joseph as naturally thought that He was with Mary, and thus they set out on the journey, leaving Jesus in Jerusalem.

"*And thinking that He was in the company,*" says the Evangelist, "*they came a day's journey and sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.*" In the evening, at the first halting place, where they were to pass the night and where the various companies came together, Mary and Joseph noticed that Jesus was not with either, and they at once began to search for Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances, but to no purpose.[1] No one could give them any information concerning Him, and they were forced to conclude that He had remained behind in Jerusalem.

The night had already come on and they were obliged to stay where they were until morning, but with what misgivings and sorrow of heart, God only knows. Jesus was to them everything, their life, and their all, and the thought that He had strayed away in a great city, in a city at that time filled with strangers and, worse still, the theater of sudden uprisings and violent suppressions, was to them an agony. And it may be, too, that these two holy souls were harrowed by a vague fear that

[1] A day's journey among the Orientals and particularly among the Hebrews was twelve miles, more or less.

William Hennessy
Xmas 1924.

they had been wanting in their duty toward Jesus and that in punishment for their neglect He had forsaken them. What a night that was for Joseph and Mary! What cruel doubts crowded upon them, what distress and anguish! How they must have gone back in thought over the events of their past lives, over the journey to Jerusalem, over all the words that Jesus had spoken, seeking if possible to find some reason to explain so distressing and mysterious a loss. You fathers, and especially you mothers, can alone feel what Joseph and Mary suffered, their grief and their desolation.

My friends, a soul separated from Jesus and deprived of His grace is indeed in a bad way; it is shrouded in the darkness of night, seeking Him and longing for Him, as one in darkness seeks and longs for light.

At the first dawn of day Joseph and Mary "*returned to Jerusalem seeking Him,*" and they must have arrived there after night had set in, fatigued by their long journey. It was useless to think of searching for Jesus at that hour and they were obliged to be resigned to pass another night in anxious and painful suspense.

But did not Joseph and Mary know that Jesus was the Son of God? Why should they fear concerning Him? Yes, they knew that and believed it with absolute certainty, and yet they feared and were borne down by grief; they feared, not for Jesus, but for themselves: they were borne down by grief, because He who was their life was not with them; they loved and therefore did they fear and were crushed under their weight of sorrow.

You fathers and mothers, who allow your children, sons and daughters, to run at large, to wander up and down the streets and through the public squares until late in the night, with dangerous or doubtful companions, exposed to every sort of danger and temptation, contrast your conduct with that of Joseph and Mary, who, though they had nothing to fear for their Son, sought Him, anxious and sorrowing, until they found Him.

Finally, at the dawn of the third day they set out again with heavy hearts in search of Jesus. Whither did they turn their steps? To the Temple. They well knew that if He could be found anywhere He would be there.

And when we have lost Jesus and His grace through sin, where shall we seek Him? In the Church, where His divine truths are heard; in the Church, at the feet of His ministers, where, together with pardon for sin, we receive the grace that restores us to the friendship of God; in the Church, where He abides in the Blessed Sacrament, and where we may receive Him into our hearts.

Having entered the Temple, which was crowded, and with difficulty making their way through the throng, they pushed on to where the Doctors of the Law and the priests were gathered, and looking anxiously about they were filled with unspeakable joy on seeing Jesus *"sitting in the midst of the Doctors hearing them and asking them questions."* Instantly all thought of what they had suffered was forgotten and their hearts were flooded with joy, coming in upon them like a tide of new life.

No one was permitted to sit in the presence of the Doctors and teachers of the Law; why, then, was this privilege granted to a poor boy of twelve years of age, alone and unknown? We must necessarily suppose that during the preceding days Jesus had given such evidences of superhuman wisdom that to sit in the midst of the Doctors of the Law, to listen to them, and in turn to put them questions, was considered an honor due Him.[1] And St. Luke adds that *"all who heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers."* The subject of His questions and answers, so replete with divine wisdom, so far beyond His age, and which so astonished those who heard Him, we do not know nor does the Gospel say.

"Seeing Him," as St. Luke says, *"Joseph and Mary wondered,"* and His Mother, approaching Him with maternal confidence and with gestures of inexplicable tenderness, mingled with such gentle reproof as such a Mother could use to such a Son, she said, *"Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."* Simple words and maternal, and so touchingly tender, that we feel at once that they come straight from the heart.

I wish that mothers would never forget the example Mary here gives them. Your sons, I know, frequently give you pain; they are intractable, disobedient, and mischievous; but bear in mind that their shortcomings are oftener the result of thoughtlessness than of malice; they love you,

[1] The Gospel does not say that there was a discussion or a disputation between Jesus and the teachers of the Law; it only says that He listened and put questions.

though they afflict you, and therefore deal gently with them, overlook their faults, and by all means let them never hear angry and bitter, much less abusive and insulting words, coming from your lips—no, never. To use such language is to destroy your authority, to lessen their respect for you, and to provoke them to anger. A loving look, a silence that betokens neither anger nor spite, a sorrowful complaint, such as that of Mary, *"Son, why hast Thou done so?"* will prove to be the best way to correct them, and, I will add, to increase in them a sentiment of filial affection.

And how do mothers deal with their boys when they fail in their duty? They can answer that question better than I. Often they reprove them sharply for the most trifling faults; they scold them and abuse them and use unbecoming language, which they surely would not use did they realize its true meaning. They mistreat them, strike them, and severely chastise them, thus destroying their authority over their children, lessening their affection, and spoiling their character, making them reserved, untruthful, hypocrites, and resentful.

"Behold," Mary says to Jesus, *"Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."* With a delicacy that can not be too much admired, Mary mentions Joseph before herself: *"Behold, Thy father and I,"* thus doing him honor in the presence of all. Wives and mothers, honor your husbands, to whom you should be subject everywhere and always, but particularly in the presence of your children; and never let a disrespectful word escape your lips, or do aught unbecoming before them.

The husband and the father is the head of the family and to him all honor and respect are always due.

What answer did Jesus make to His Mother and to Joseph? *"How is it that you sought me? Did ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* At first sight these words may seem harsh and irreverent, but such is surely not the fact, nor could it be. Jesus is in everything a most perfect model, and He was singularly so in the respect He paid to His Mother, of all creatures the most holy. Very frequently the meaning of words depends upon the way in which they are spoken, on the accent, the look, the gesture that accompanies them; so that words that might sound harsh and rude in themselves become, when so uttered, tokens of confidence and love. I believe that Jesus in uttering these words did so in a tone of voice and with a look of tender filial affection, which took from them all apparent harshness, and which made them express a certain surprise that they should have doubted of Him, or of His love, or of the necessity of His doing what He did in separating from them for three days, and thus causing them pain and sorrow. Jesus as man had duties toward Joseph and His Mother, but He had duties of another kind and of a higher order toward His heavenly Father. It is not necessary to note that when His heavenly Father entrusted to Jesus Christ a work for His service and His glory, He should forego everything else, even His duty to His Mother, to do it. His Father had bidden Him to do what necessarily implied a painful sacrifice to His Mother and to Joseph, and He

could not and did not hesitate to do it. Possibly, too, God by that act wanted to make Mary feel that she must prepare herself for still greater sacrifices and for still longer absences from her Son during the days of His public life.

My friends, let us learn to put the will of God before what we most love, and, if necessary, to sacrifice to His will our dearest and holiest affections, even the love we bear our parents. When God speaks, His glory and our salvation equally demand that we obey, at the cost of every other love or interest.[1] Mary said: *"Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing,"* and Jesus replied: *"Did ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* Evidently Jesus wished to make it clear that Joseph was not His true father, that He had another, and who? Assuredly God. Jesus affirms throughout the Gospels, everywhere and at all times, that God is His Father; that He is doing His Father's will; that He works together with His Father; that the doctrine He teaches He receives from His Father; in a word, He affirms and reiterates His own divine origin.

Joseph and Mary were silent, but the Evangelist makes this observation: *"And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them."* It is not surprising that Joseph and Mary did not understand the meaning of the words of Jesus. They knew that Jesus was the Son of God and that He was come to save mankind; they also knew that

[1]Some think that the words: "Did ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?" indicate that Jesus meant that He was to be found in the Temple, as if He would say: "You might have been sure that I was in the Temple," but the interpretation is a forced one.

He would set up a kingdom, the kingdom of God, for Mary had learned this from the angel; but they did not know how this kingdom was to be founded, that it was to be founded later on by preaching and that of this preaching the sojourn of Jesus in the Temple was the first essay.

"*And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.*" In these few words St. Luke condenses the eighteen years that Jesus lived in Nazareth from the day on which they were uttered until that on which He entered upon His public life. Truly this is a mystery of divine wisdom. What did Jesus do from His twelfth to His thirtieth year? Modern criticism has made and is still making great efforts to penetrate into the mysterious obscurity of these eighteen years and to find the secret of how this Man, so extraordinary and unaccountable to them, was formed. They claim to know that He traveled and that He studied in I know not what schools. But these are all dreams and futile attempts to explain humanly what can never be humanly explained. Where is the good of forming wild theories about journeyings, and studies, and the schools frequented by Jesus from His twelfth to His thirtieth year? The Gospel says with admirable simplicity: "*Jesus went down to Nazareth and was subject to Joseph and Mary.*" He spent His days in a small shop, like any other ordinary workman; He, God, the Saviour of the world, lived by toiling at a lowly trade, joyously, constantly, and in all things obeying two of His creatures. Here the human mind is confused and baffled, and it is better silently to adore this mys-

tery of divine wisdom and love, than to lessen it by discoursing upon it.

"*And His Mother kept all these words in her heart.*" And this, my friends, is a most useful lesson. Mary listened to the words of Jesus, she noted all His works, she meditated upon them, she tried to fathom their meaning and turn it to spiritual account. And this is what we should do; we should store our minds with the teaching of Jesus Christ as found in the Gospels, in His words and works, and strive to make our lives a copy of His.[1]

[1] I do not explain the last verse, because in substance it is identical with that explained at the end of Homily X.

Second Sunday after Epiphany

HOMILY XIII

And having different gifts, according to the grace that is given us, either prophecy, to be used according to the rule of faith; or ministry, in ministering; or he that teacheth, in doctrine; he that exhorteth, in exhorting; he that giveth with simplicity; he that ruleth with carefulness; he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation; hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good: loving one another with the charity of the brotherhood, with honor preventing one another; in carefulness not slothful, in spirit fervent, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints, pursuing hospitality. Bless them that persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep; being of one mind one toward another; not minding high things, but consenting to the humble.—Epistle, *Rom.* xii. 6-16.

This passage of the Epistle to the Romans follows immediately after that explained in Homily XI, and consists of a series of wonderfully beautiful moral truths. They come forth from the ardent soul of the Apostle with incomparable rapidity, ease, and force. Had these sublime yet simple maxims, which admirably answer to what is deepest and noblest in our nature, fallen upon the ears of Plato or of Aristotle, of Cicero or of

other pagan philosophers, how astonished they would have been! How enthusiastically they would have made them their own! They are ever before our eyes and are being constantly dinned into our ears, and still we scarcely give them a thought. Born with light all around us we fail to appreciate its worth; instructed in these most holy truths we do not value their excellence as we should. Let us now take them up and consider them singly and with loving appreciation, and we shall see their beauty.

After saying that the Church is like to a human body, which though only one, has many members, all having diverse functions and all working harmoniously together, each in its place, he goes on to add: *"We have different gifts according to the grace that is given us; prophecy, to be used according to the rule of faith."* The sun, while only one, produces an infinite variety of colors, differing according to the nature of the objects it illuminates; so also God, being one and of a most simple substance, endows souls with most varied gifts, gifts which show forth the grandeur and inexhaustible fecundity of the Giver. Have we not each our own peculiar gifts? Let us use them. Have we the gift of prophecy? Here prophecy does not precisely mean the gift of foretelling the future, but the faculty of discoursing upon religious subjects. If, then, we have this gift, let us use it in the measure in which we have received it and according to our strength. If we have the gift of ministering, the Apostle adds, let us minister. That is, have we the office of ruling and governing? Let us discharge it as we should. Sim-

ilarly, if we have the office of teaching, we should fulfil it as best we can. He who exhorts, or encourages his brethren to flee vice and practise virtue, should do so with all zeal. He who gives or distributes charity, should do so in all simplicity, with singleness of purpose, banishing every unworthy motive, and having only in view the thought of relieving his neighbor and doing what is pleasing to God. Whoso rules and governs others should do so with carefulness and diligence. There are many exalted offices in the Church, and those who hold them should bear in mind that the scope of these offices is not to accumulate money, or to exact homage, or to use them to gain honors, or as a means to an easy life, but that their specific and immediate end is the saving of the souls of others and their own, and hence that they should be earnestly and faithfully discharged. "He that sheweth mercy," says St. Paul, "should do so cheerfully." *"He that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness."* What a beautiful expression! Do you succor the needy? Do you comfort the sorrowful? Do you teach the ignorant? Do you counsel the doubtful and the faltering? Do you visit the sick or perform any act of charity? Do all with a cheerful,contented look, because God wills that you should. *He loves a cheerful giver;* and your good works so done will be more efficacious in themselves and more pleasing to God. Note those Sisters of Charity who spend their days and nights in hospitals, going from bed to bed; who have ever before their eyes the sight of human misery; who are always cheerful, have always a smile upon their lips, a kind word and an eye beaming with

sympathy, illustrating what St. Paul means when he bids us "*shew mercy with cheerfulness.*" To which he adds: "*Let love be without dissimulation.*" Away with deceit and dissimulation, whether in word or act; let our charity be open, frank, and candid. And here the Apostle, as if putting into a sentence all he has said or has still to say, cries out: "*Hate that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.*" It would seem that here the Apostle should make an end of his exhortations and precepts, but he does not. He is like a loving father, who has only the good of his children at heart, who adds prayers to exhortations, injunctions to tokens of affection, and who, when he seems to have finished, begins again anew; his heart never says, enough.

And so St. Paul begins another exhortation, as if nothing had gone before. "*Love one another,*" he says, "*with the charity of the brotherhood.*" It was a new precept which Jesus Christ had brought into the world. He had spoken to the apostles, and to all men through them, these sublime words: "*You are brothers.*" Therefore, "*love one another as brothers.*" There have been those who have inscribed on their banners this word, "Fraternity," and then proceeded forthwith to drench them in blood. Did they not know that Jesus Christ eighteen centuries before had said of all men: "*You are brothers,*" and that St. Paul had repeated the same, saying, "*Love one another with the charity of the brotherhood?*" It was hardly possible that they should not have known this. They did know it, but they would arrogate to themselves the proud boast of having been the

first to proclaim this divine teaching. My friends, let us love our brothers, not in words or in empty protestations, but let us be eager to prove our love in works, by honoring them, sympathizing with them, and giving them aid when they are in need.

Brotherly love is a prolific source of good; from it spring not only works, but kind words also, and those proprieties and amenities which make life pleasant and honorable and foster mutual respect and benevolence. This is what St. Paul means by the beautiful words which follow: *"In honor preventing one another,"* each anticipating the other in doing one another honor. If charity reigns in our hearts and inspires all our actions, we shall be careful to do nothing that will give offense to our brothers; we shall do what we think will please them, and there will be a laudable and a holy rivalry in anticipating one another in doing one another honor. And this the Apostle teaches in another passage, saying: *"But in humility let each esteem others better than themselves."*

And, my friends, is not the code of Jesus Christ, which in substance is charity, also a perfect code of education, morality, and civilization? *"Be not slothful,"* says the Apostle, in doing your duty, *"but fervent in spirit,"* prompt, urged on by the fire of charity, kindled in you by the Holy Spirit, intent only upon serving the Lord, the ultimate end of all our actions.

St. Paul does not stop here; he is borne on by the impetuosity of his charity and with amazing rapidity heaps practical truths together with a conciseness and fulness of meaning beyond even that of Tacitus. *"Rejoicing in hope, patient in*

tribulation, instant in prayer." The hope of reward cheers on the laborer in the field, the artisan in the shop, the merchant on a journey; and the hope of reward in heaven lights up with joy the countenance of the Christian who suffers and endures in the conflict of life, and gives him strength in the midst of sufferings and sorrows. And when he feels, as he sometimes will feel, that he is losing ground, he betakes himself to prayer, where alone he finds strength and security, and he does not leave off praying until victory is certain. The Apostle does not lose sight of the fact that man does not and can not live isolated here below, that he has close and continuous relations with his fellow-men, and these he sets before us in another form: "*Communicate to the necessities of the saints; pursue hospitality.*" The needs and the necessities of all should be personal to each of us, as much so as if they were our own, and particularly the needs and necessities of the saints, of our brothers in the Faith called to be saints; and, if they be pilgrims, let us offer them hospitality.[1]

St. Paul continues: "*Bless them that persecute you and curse not.*" Strange teaching this and a strange precept. Here the charity of Jesus Christ reaches the height of perfection. To love all men and to prove that love in works, to love strangers as brothers, is certainly a great deal and something wholly unknown to the pagan world; but to

[1]In those days, and even down to very near our own, the duty of hospitality was urgent, because the discomforts of pilgrims were great, and it was difficult to find a safe and a hospitable roof. In our day the changed social conditions have in a great measure removed the need of such hospitality.

love even our enemies, to bless those who persecute and revile us and, if possible, to heap benefits upon them, is something that transcends all human comprehension; and such a precept of itself, for it is a precept and not merely a counsel, is enough to prove that the origin of the Gospel is not human, but divine.

Every man, no matter how good or virtuous he may be, will have his enemies, be they few or many, those who wish him evil and are envious of his good fortune. The saints and the apostles had theirs, and Jesus Christ, the King of saints, had His, and can we, who are so full of defects and so prone to give offense, sometimes without intending to do so, be surprised that we have ours? And what shall we do to love our enemies? The Apostle tells us: "*Bless them that persecute you; bless and curse not.*" Jesus Christ on the cross turned to His Father and prayed for His executioners, asking Him to be merciful to them: "*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*" St. Peter, speaking of Jesus and holding Him up as a pattern, says: "*Who when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, threatened not.*"[1] Let us pardon offenses, love our enemies, pray for them, return good for evil, and God will be merciful to us all. My friends, all things will go well with us if we pardon our enemies and do good to them that do us evil. Then shall we experience a peace and taste a joy which no words can express. And this reward alone will amply compensate us for the sacrifice we make in being silent under the infliction of wrong and insult.

[1] 1 Peter ii. 23.

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You may search all the writings of the greatest philosophers of paganism, of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, of Cicero, Plato, and Aristotle; you may search the sacred codes of all peoples, both ancient and modern, not Christian, and while you will find here and there beautiful passages and admirable sentiments on the love of one's neighbor, on hospitality and almsgiving and the pardon of offenses, you will never find these truths all brought together so clearly, briefly, strongly, and with such perfection as in the Gospel and in these few sentences of St. Paul. And why so? Because these truths come not from man but from God.

"*Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep.*" This precept follows naturally from the precept of charity and from the other injunctions given above by the Apostle. Charity so unites hearts that they have everything in common, whether good or evil, and hence they rejoice and suffer together. If honors come to your father or mother or to your brothers, if they are prosperous and abound in everything, does this not give you pleasure? If they are sick and suffering, harassed and persecuted, do you not suffer with them? And why? Because the love that binds you together makes you all, as it were, one person, and all suffer the same sorrows and rejoice in the same joy. If this love embraced, not a few, but all men, we should have the same result: we should rejoice with all those that rejoice and weep with all those that weep.

"*Be of one mind toward one another,*" the Apostle concludes. He repeats in another form what he said in a preceding verse. "*Not minding*

high things, but consenting to the humble." Do not aspire to greatness, or honors, or riches, or to the things which the world so desires but which never satisfy the heart; take what God gives, and if your station is lowly, be contented, and you will be as happy and as much at peace as it is possible to be here below.

If we inquire into the cause of a great many of our sorrows and discontents, we shall find that their source is the desire always to acquire more than we possess; and this desire goads us on and torments us like an implacable executioner. Unsatisfied desires are the torment of our poor hearts; let us stifle them and we shall have peace, the peace that the world knows not.

HOMILY XIV

At that time there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the

water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water: the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drank, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.—Gospel, *John* ii. 1-11.

After coming up out of the desert, where He had fasted forty days, and after having thrice vanquished the tempter, Jesus Christ went to the banks of the Jordan, where John was preaching, and from there He withdrew into Galilee, where He entered upon His public life by working His first miracle, an account of which, as narrated by St. John, I have just read for you. There is hardly any need of explaining this miracle; still it is very important from the fact that it was wrought at the instance of His Mother and because it is one of the very few places in the Gospel where Mary is spoken of and where her own words are recorded.

"*There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee and the Mother of Jesus was there.*" Cana was a village about an hour's walk from Nazareth on the road, if it merits that name, which leads to Tiberias; at present it is only a group of miserable huts, possibly two hundred, where country people dwell. It contains two small churches, one on the site of the room in which, it is said, the miracle took place; and the other where, tradition says, the house of Nathaniel or St. Bartholomew stood.

To the east of Cana there is an insignificant fountain whence, it is claimed, was obtained the water that was changed into wine. Who the couple were who were married and whose marriage-feast was, according to ancient and universal custom, being celebrated, the Gospel does not say, nor is it important to know. It is very natural to suppose that they were relatives of Mary and Jesus. Jesus, it would seem, was invited out of consideration for His mother; and the four or five disciples, namely, Peter, Andrew, Nathaniel or Bartholomew, who was himself of Cana, and Philip were invited out of regard for Jesus, whose followers they were. The Evangelist is careful to say that the village where the marriage took place was Cana of Galilee, to distinguish it from another Cana on the confines of Phenicia.

The condescension of Jesus is admirable. He accepts the invitation of the bridegroom and bride, who, as appears from the fact that there was a scarcity of wine, were certainly poor; He, together with His mother and His disciples, sat at that humble table; He honored those lowly people; He sanctified that marriage by His presence; and He showed that it is entirely in keeping with virtue and the most exalted sanctity to participate in family feasts and domestic joys, provided only they be modest and blameless.

We can easily fancy what sort of a feast that of Cana was, when Jesus and Mary and some of the disciples were there. What dignity and modesty! What grace and ease of manners! The festivities never went beyond the proper bounds. How different, my friends, from our feastings, where we

too often indulge in language that is censorious, slanderous, and undignified, and in eating and drinking transcend the bounds of moderation.

"*And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus said to Him: They have no wine.*" We may infer from the words of the steward that it was near the end of the feast when the word went furtively around among the guests that the wine had given out. Mary was silent, but divined what was being said, or possibly read how things were in the countenances, flushed with shame, of the bridegroom and bride; and moved to pity at their embarrassment, which she keenly felt, with the confidence of a mother and a look full of affection she turned to her Son, who was near her, and said: "*They have no wine.*" She asked nothing, she made no request; she simply laid before her Son the need of the young couple; she trusted to the kindness and to the heart of Jesus, perfectly sure that He would provide.

It is to be observed here that Mary interceded with her Son on behalf of the bridegroom and bride without being asked either by them or by any one else, simply moved to do so by her thoughtfulness and tenderness of heart. This fact alone should give us an insight into the heart of Mary. If she could feel such pity for this poor couple and for their material needs as to become their mediator, without even being asked, what will she not do when she sees our spiritual distress and when asked to aid us?

What answer did Jesus make to the request of His mother? "*Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.*" Looking at

these words superficially, we should be inclined to say that they are lacking in reverence; but God forbid that such a suspicion should enter our minds, or that Jesus should be wanting in the respect due to His mother, or that she should have merited a rebuke. We frequently find expressions of this kind in the sacred writings and they mean simply: "This is nothing to you; it is no affair of ours," and the like.[1] If we utter these words harshly, angrily, or disrespectfully, certainly they will sound irreverent and offensive; but if in uttering them there is a note of confidence in our voice and a smile upon our lips, they will convey no suggestion of harshness or disdain; and surely Jesus so uttered them; and the proof of this is that He forthwith proceeded to do what His mother asked. In substance Jesus said this: "Mother, you ask Me to do a miracle; that is a work of My divine nature which I receive from My Father, not of My human nature, which I received from you. In this matter, then, you have no rights; in this I must obey My Father's will, and the time for working miracles is not yet come." Let it not surprise you that Jesus calls Mary, not by the sweet name of mother, but by that of woman. Here He wished to make it clearly understood that in such matters her rights as mother ceased and gave place to the rights of His Father alone. Moreover, among ancient nations, and among some modern nations also, sons sometimes, as a mark of respect, called their mothers, not mother, but lady.

Jesus Christ must have said something more to signify that He was inclined to gratify His

[1] 2 Kings xvi. 10, xix. 22; 2 Paral. xxxv. 21.

mother's wish, because she, turning to the servants, said: "*Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece.*" The Hebrews were accustomed often to wash their hands and feet, especially before dining,[1] and for this purpose these water-pots filled with water were to be found in every house. The Evangelist tells us approximately their capacity, saying that each held two or three measures, which would be equal to about one hundred and ten gallons of water.

Jesus said to the servants: "*Fill the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim.*" Here note that Jesus asked the servants to fill the pots with water in order that there might be no question as to the reality of the miracle and that the servants themselves might bear witness to it. After the servants had in the presence of all the guests filled the pots with water, Jesus said to them: "*Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast,*" that is, to him who presided at the feast, and who was called *architriclinus,* which means the master of the couches, because the ancients, both Romans and Jews, used to take their meals lying or reclining on couches. The miracle of the change of water into wine must have taken place at the very moment when Jesus bade the servants draw it out. "*And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not*

[1]The Pharisees reproached the disciples of Jesus with not washing their hands before going to meals: "They wash not their hands when they eat bread."

whence it was, but the waiters knew, who had drawn the water, the chief steward called the bridegroom and said to him: Every man at first sets forth good wine, and when they have well drunk, then that which is worse, but you have kept the good wine until now.'' These particulars are recorded by the Evangelist, as is clear, the better to attest the fact of the miracle.

And here, my friends, let us stop a moment to consider two points worthy of our best attention.

This is the first miracle wrought by Jesus Christ and with it He opened His public life. And by whom was He induced to work it? By Mary, and she induced Him to work it, although He protested that His hour had not yet come, as if He would say: "Left to Myself, I would not do the miracle now, but, mother, since you desire it, I will do it." Thus Jesus wished to give to His Mother Mary the glory of His first miracle; hence, as she brought Him into the world, giving Him His human nature, so she introduced Him into public life, making Him known by that first miracle, which she urged Him to work.

And here is another fact that should not escape our notice. The miracles of Jesus Christ may be divided into two classes, distinct one from the other; some miracles were visible and belonged to the material order, as, for example, the healing of the sick and infirm, the raising the dead to life, and the one of which we are speaking; others were not visible and belonged to the spiritual order, such as the conversion of Mary Magdalen, of the Samaritan woman, and the like. The spiritual and invisible miracles are more excellent than the visi-

ble and material, the latter being a means to the former. Now what was the first miracle wrought by Jesus Christ in the spiritual order? Assuredly the sanctification of the Precursor, as narrated by St. Luke. How and by what means did Jesus Christ, who had just been conceived, sanctify the Baptist? By means of His mother, who carried Him to the house of Elizabeth; she was the instrument of which Jesus Christ made use to fill His Precursor with grace and to infuse the spirit of prophecy into the Baptist's mother, as is clear from Elizabeth's own words: *"As soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy;"* and, *"Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost."*

The miracle related in to-day's Gospel belongs to the visible and material order, and, as St. John says, it was His first. The first miracle, therefore, wrought by Jesus Christ, both in the visible and in the invisible, the material and the spiritual order, is due to Mary, an instrument in one case, an intercessor in the other. What an honor, what a glory for Mary! What a lesson for us, and what confidence it gives us in her who is the dispenser of all graces. Through her Jesus became man and entered into this world; through her He lighted His first and most luminous light, John Baptist: *"He was a burning and shining light;"* through her the first flash of His divinity shone forth at Cana of Galilee and attached to Him His first disciples, who, as St. John says, believed in Him. But their faith was not indeed a perfect faith, they did not distinctly believe in the divine personality of Jesus, their faith was hazy and confused, an ini-

tial faith, as is clear from the whole story of the Gospel and of the events that followed.

Still, it was a faith strong enough to determine them from that moment to follow Him as their teacher. I believe, also, that the first miracle was intended to prepare His disciples to have faith in that miracle of miracles, the Blessed Eucharist, which He was to institute at the close of His public life, and thus the first miracle is linked to the last, to that supreme proof of His infinite love.

Third Sunday after Epiphany

HOMILY XV

BRETHREN: Be not wise in your own conceits: to no man rendering evil for evil: providing good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, having peace with all men. Not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place unto wrath, for it is written: Revenge to me: I will repay, saith the Lord. But if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him drink; for doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* xii. 16-21.

THESE remarkable words of the Apostle are a continuation of the Epistle of last Sunday, as that was a continuation of the Epistle of the Sunday before. In the Epistles of these three Sundays after Epiphany the Church sets before us for our meditation the entire twelfth chapter of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, which is an admirable compendium of the sublime moral teaching of the Gospel.

I really believe that if all the most beautiful and perfect passages to be found scattered through the writings of the philosophers of Greece and Rome on the moral duties of man were collected and arranged in one work, they would not contain a tithe of the moral truths which St. Paul has crowded into this one chapter. And what a difference there

is between their teaching, so uncertain, diffuse, and defective, mingled with error and destitute of authority, and that of St. Paul, so precise, brief, and perfect, free from all shadow of error and breathing the very spirit of authority. A single page of St. Paul, if meditated upon as it should be, will make us feel and realize what a vast difference there is between the moral teaching of the wisest and greatest of pagan philosophers and that of Jesus Christ. And now for our commentary.

"Be not wise in your own conceits, to no man rendering evil for evil." One of the greatest and most frequent causes of our troubles, whether private or public, is the overweening confidence we have in our own ability and powers, making us presumptuous and reckless in speech and action, thus forming in us a habit of imprudence with all its evil consequences. Whence St. Paul warns his spiritual children not to think themselves wise in their own conceit, not to trust too much in themselves, but to seek light from others more wise than they are, and first and above all from God, from whom all light comes. *"To no man render evil for evil."* This phrase here escapes St. Paul in the haste of writing, and, as it will be soon repeated by him and more fully amplified, we shall consider it when commenting on the following verses.

"Providing good things not only in the sight of God but in the sight of all men." These words, which St. Paul takes from the Book of Proverbs,[1] deserve to be explained somewhat at length.

We should always do right, but it may some-

[1] iii. 4.

times happen that what is right in the sight of God is not equally so in the eyes of men, who judge from appearances and are frequently influenced by passion and prejudice; hence we should do our best to correct their judgment and to make it clear to them that what we have done is really right, thus removing what would be to them a scandal.

Another, and possibly a better, interpretation may be put upon these words: God sees our mind and our heart and knows our intentions; men see our deeds and hear our words and know only what they see and hear. Let us, then, strive to do all things, whether in thought or deed, whether before God or men, in such a way as to please at once both God and men.

First of all, we must do right before God. How? By having a pure intention; namely, that of doing our duty, of obeying God, of working for His glory and for the good of our neighbor, casting out from our mind any other end whatsoever unbecoming a Christian, such as vanity, or caprice, or self-interest and the like. It is the end or intention that chiefly determines the character of an action, makes it good or bad, and this God alone sees.

We should also do what is right before men, in order that charity may not be wounded, that our conduct may not be wrongfully interpreted, and that all, if possible, may be edified.

"*If it be possible, as much as is in you, having peace with all men.*" The Apostle desires that we should be at peace with all men, understanding by this the peace which Jesus Christ brought on earth and which He so often urged upon His apostles; but He adds two obvious conditions. Peace is de-

sirable and we should make every effort to secure it, saving always the rights of truth and justice. If men demand, as a condition of giving us peace, that we sacrifice truth and justice, then we should forego peace and accept war, even though the conflict be long and cruel. It was in this sense that Jesus Christ said that He came to bring, not peace, but the sword or war, and to this the Apostle refers when he says: "*If it be possible, be at peace with all.*"

There is another condition which frequently has to be dealt with.

We may wish and desire to be at peace, but others of evil mind may refuse, and in this case peace is not possible. What are we to do? What is expected of us? We are expected, and no more can be asked, to be always disposed to make and keep peace, as St. Paul clearly says: "*As much as is in us.*" That others will not be at peace with us or that they will persist in breaking existing peace, is indeed an evil, but it is of their making and they will have to give an account of it to God; but for all that let us desire peace and never do aught to disturb or break it.

Let us follow the magnificent moral teaching of the Apostle: "*Not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved.*" Others, St. Paul says, may disturb our peace, insult us, invade our rights, and do us all sorts of evil wrongfully. What shall we do? May we take the law into our hands and wreak vengeance upon our enemies and oppressors? No, says the great apostle, by no means; that is not lawful, it is not Christian, it is not even manly. "*Give place unto wrath,*" says St. Paul. And

what means this giving place to anger? If another hates you, and breaks out into anger against you, and heaps indignities upon you, bear it all patiently, wait until the impetuous torrent of his anger subsides and passes away; to withstand him would only be to make matters worse; and moreover, we should bear in mind that a kind and soft word turns away wrath. The fury of the rushing wind prostrates trees that stand erect and resist it, but not the lowly shrub that bends before it. How many disputes, quarrels, and strifes both at home and abroad would be avoided if we would only give place to anger and bridle our tongue; when our brother is in a rage and his eyes gleam with an ominous light, we should remain silent and tranquil, and say nothing to exasperate him. Keep in memory always the words of St. Paul: *"Give place to wrath."*

"Not revenging yourselves." If every one should revenge himself because of injuries received, what a condition of things we should have? Society would be in a state of anarchy and cease to exist. If one should take the law into his own hands, every one else would have an equal right to do the same, and every one would be his own judge and an avenger of the wrongs he has, or thinks he has, sustained; and more often than not, right would yield to force or be beaten down by violence. The individual has no right to avenge the wrongs he has sustained. Who has? God, and God alone, who administers justice here below by means of constituted authority, which maintains order, restores it if it is disturbed, and which can and should do justice to all.

It is hardly necessary to say that by these words of St. Paul: *"Not revenging yourselves,"* is forbidden not only all private revenge, but also dueling, of which we hear so much now and then, and which is, in substance, a personal revenge. One receives some sort of an offense and forthwith challenges to a duel him who has given it; and both go armed upon the field, accompanied by physicians, seconds, and witnesses, to decide who is right. Nothing, my friends, is more irrational than these duels, which we have dignified by the name of trials or tests of honor and social necessities.

Has another unjustly wronged you? You can appeal to the courts or to the judges, or, if you like, to arbiters; explain to them in what your rights have been violated and they will do you justice.

But if instead you seek redress with weapons in your hands you will commit to force the decision as to whether or not you are right. Can there be anything more contrary to common-sense and to natural reason than to make an appeal, not to law or to reason, but to force, and frequently to chance? And how often do they who are in the right get the worst of a duel, and, in addition to the original offense, are wounded, or it may be killed or humiliated by defeat?

What is the difference between them and two vulgar ruffians of the street, who, because of some affront given by one to the other, set upon and pound each other, or it may be draw a knife and wound or kill each other? There is none at all, or if there is a difference, it is certainly not in favor

of duelists, because they are better educated and because they fight in cold blood, according to a certain code, and with chosen weapons, and hence their crime is less excusable.

They make a great ado about outraged honor. Honor is repaired by the judgment of competent men, by a sentence of the court, but never by the use of arms and by violating law and honor itself.

Believe me, my friends, dueling is something unworthy of rational men, and of good citizens; it is a relict of barbarism, it is the right of force, it is the judgment of chance, and all the sophisms in the world can not justify it. It is a crime of the most vulgar kind.

Let us submit ourselves to the authority set up by God on earth and representing Him, as we would to God Himself. And if we can not get justice, either because this authority can not or will not grant it to us, let us raise our eyes on high to Him who is the infallible Judge, from whom there is no escape and who has said: "Revenge is Mine; I will repay." Let us commit our cause to God; He will punish those who have wronged us and mete out to them reward according to their works. If we take vengeance into our own hands we usurp a right that belongs to God alone.

Here is a father who has many sons; they dispute among themselves, and one sets to quarreling with another, mistreats him and brutally strikes him in his father's presence. What would you say of such a one? Certainly you would condemn him, even if he were right and his brother wrong, and you would say: "You have your father, who is your natural judge, and all questions should be

referred to him for decision; and in taking revenge on your own account you have seriously violated the right of your father and wickedly usurped an authority which is not yours."

We are all children of our Father in heaven and therefore brothers; let us not rise up against one another; let us leave our quarrels to be settled by those whom God has placed on earth to rule us; and if they do not do their duty, let us commit the matter to God, to whom all must render an account of their deeds.

And in the meantime how should we deal with those who have given us offense and with our enemies? Refuse to speak to them? Cherish anger against them in our hearts? Avoid them as we would an enemy? Listen, my friends, to the teaching of St. Paul: "*If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst give him to drink.*" This is in other words a repetition of what Christ taught: "*Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.*"[1] Charity could not rise to a greater height.

"*Doing this,*" the Apostle goes on, "*thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.*" How so? By loving them who hate us, by doing good to them who persecute us and do us wrong, we shall constrain them to leave off hating us, and compel them to love us by very dint of the kindness we do them. "You will heap coals of fire upon their heads," says St. Jerome, "not as a malediction and a condemnation, as some think,[2] but for their

[1] Matt. v. 44.

[2] From the time of St. Jerome on some have interpreted this

correction and amendment, that, overcome by benefits and subdued by charity, they may cease to be your enemies."

St. Paul concludes: "*Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good,*" that is to say, do good to him who does you wrong; this will be the best and most glorious of victories.

Ecclesiastical history and the lives of the saints are full of luminous examples of this great charity, and they are not rare in our own day in souls in which the teaching of Jesus Christ is, not only a profession, but an active and living reality.

I myself have known a merchant who rose from nothing, who was a good husband, an excellent father of a family and a model Christian. He was wonderfully prosperous in his business. A neighbor, also a merchant, was envious of his success, spoke evilly of him, cast suspicion upon his honesty, spread injurious reports about him, thus causing him much pain and loss, and injuring his credit. The good man suffered in silence, never, however, refusing to salute his envious and evil-tongued neighbor. The business of this latter went to the bad; he could not meet his obligations and disaster was imminent. His condition was known to the victim of his slander and his envy, who, without saying a word to any one, went to the creditors of his competitor and his enemy, paid his debts and thus saved him from catastrophe,

passage to mean that when good is thus done to an enemy a more signal punishment is being laid up for him. This in itself may be true, if the enemy does not repent and amend, but assuredly such can not be the intention of his benefactor, nor could the Apostle, in writing these words, have had such a thought. That interpretation has about it an Hebraic flavor.

transmitting to him as delicately as possible the canceled notes. The unfortunate man, amazed at such generosity, burst out crying, hastened to his benefactor, fell upon his neck, asked his pardon, and spoke to every one he met of his heroic virtue.

Here, my friends, is a man who heaped coals of fire upon the head of his enemy and overcame evil by good.

HOMILY XVI

At that time, when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him: and behold a leper came and adored Him saying: Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth His hand, touched him, saying: I will. Be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man: but go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them. And when He had entered in Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion, making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this: Go, and he goeth: and to another: Come, and he cometh: and to my servant: Do this, and he doth it. And Jesus hearing this, marveled: and said to them that followed Him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great

faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.—Gospel, *Matt.* viii. 1-13.

The passage of the Gospel which you have just heard and which is read in to-day's Mass, records two facts, or rather miracles: the healing of the leper and restoration to health of the centurion's servant. Interwoven with these two facts we have the splendid example of the centurion's faith, which merited a magnificent eulogy from Our Lord. Let us dispense with all introduction and go straight to the explanation of the two facts as given in the Gospel.

"*When Jesus was come down from the mountain great multitudes followed Him.*" The mountain mentioned here, from which Jesus came down, is the same one on which He gave the discourse on the beatitudes, known as the Sermon on the Mount, and which is on the left of the road from Cana to Tiberias. The multitudes that went up on the Mount with Him came down when He did and had certainly dispersed when He wrought the miracle narrated by the Evangelist.

"*A leper came and adored Him, saying: Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*" Leprosy is a disease that manifests its presence by

whitish spots and an offensive smell. These spots appear all over the body, but especially on the face and hands. Leprosy is incurable, or nearly so, and in its last stages causes the flesh and the members to fall off in shreds amid the most excruciating pain. It was brought by the Hebrews from Egypt and is very contagious, and hence the Mosaic Law prescribed, as the only preventive against its spread, that those suffering from it should be isolated. The Crusaders contracted it and spread it through Europe, but especially in France, where it reaped a large harvest. It is very rare among us, but cases of it are not infrequent in Norway, Madagascar, and in some of the islands of the Pacific.

The leper mentioned in the Gospel was likely driven out from the habitations of men and was roaming about at the foot of the mountain. He had certainly heard something of Jesus and of the miracles wrought by Him, and hence, impelled by a living faith, he hastened to Him, fell at His feet, adored Him and addressed to Him these words, most eloquent in their simplicity: "*Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.* With Thee to will is to do, cleanse me of this filth."

A circumstance may here be noted which is not much heeded, namely, that nearly all the miracles of Jesus Christ were wrought in answer to the prayers of those who appealed for help. Did not Jesus see their infirmity, did He not know their needs? Certainly, He saw all and knew all. Why, then, did He require to be asked? In order that His petitioners might be brought to feel their needs, might humble themselves, show their faith

and hope, and in a sense co-operate with the divine intervention which they craved. And this rule, which Jesus observed during His mortal life, He will continue to observe until the end of time.

The leper had appealed to the heart of Jesus: "*If Thou wilt,*" and Jesus moved to pity, stretching forth His hand and laying it upon the leper, as if to encourage him, said, "*I will; be thou made clean, and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed.*" The evidence to prove the miracle could not be greater. The disease, which is in its nature incurable, was visible to all; the cure was effected in an instant, without the application of remedies, which, even when applied in cases of sickness, produce their effect only gradually and little by little.

This instantaneous healing of the body is a figure of the healing of the soul, which is effected in an instant, when the penitent, sorry for his sins, presents himself to the minister of Jesus Christ and says to him: "Cleanse my heart of sin," and the minister by the words of absolution cleanses his soul and restores him to peace with God.

Is not our conduct a marvel? If by some untoward circumstance we should be stricken with the horrible disease of leprosy or some other serious affliction, and Jesus were still upon the earth, or another who wrought miracles such as He wrought, would we not hasten to Him, cast ourselves at His feet and refuse to rise until we had been cured? We are covered all over with the leprosy of sin, hateful to God, to His angels and, it may be, to ourselves; Jesus is here in the person of His minister, ready and anxious to cleanse us; our immediate and complete cure may be had without

the least cost; all that is required is to make known our infirmity, to be sorry for the sin committed, and to say: "I have sinned; I crave pardon; cleanse me of my filth;" and we will not be persuaded, preferring rather to continue to carry about with us wherever we go the loathsome leprosy of sin. What blindness!

"*And Jesus said to him: See thou tell no man, but go, show thyself to the priest and offer the gift, which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.*" It is to be noted, as I have already said, that the leper was separated from the society of men, as prescribed by the Law of Moses; if he got well, which happened only when the attack was very slight, he was obliged to go before the priest, who was a sort of physician, and who attested that he was cured of the leprosy and declared that he might again associate with men without danger to them. The priest then received from him two sparrows, one of which he let escape, as a symbol of the leper's newly acquired liberty, and the other he offered in sacrifice.

Jesus commanded the leper to say nothing to any one of the miracle, thus teaching us to conceal the gifts of God and never to boast of them; and He also directed him to discharge toward the priests the duties prescribed by the Law of Moses. Jesus in this shows us that we must respect the rights of others and observe all the prescriptions of authority. I believe also that Jesus did this to take away from the priests, who had already commenced to accuse Him of violating the law, any pretext for a complaint against Him or for making war on Him.

The leper was cleansed not far from Capharnaum, a village on the upper part of the western shore of the Lake of Genesareth, now a heap of ruins and a retreat for poor fishermen.

After narrating the miracle wrought upon the leper, St. Matthew goes on: "*When He had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion beseeching Him, saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy and is grievously tormented.*" This fact is also narrated in the seventh chapter of St. Luke, but a little differently. This is easily explained. St. Luke says that the centurion, or one set over a hundred soldiers, and corresponding to our captain, was a religious man and had built a synagogue; he says also, that first the Jews went to Jesus and besought Him to heal the centurion's servant. Jesus must have set out to go to the house of the centurion, who sent some of his friends to meet Him and beg Him not to inconvenience Himself, but Jesus, persisting in going to the house, the centurion himself came out to meet the divine Master and besought Him to heal his servant, stricken with palsy. This centurion was certainly not a Hebrew, but a Roman, stationed at the garrison at Capharnaum and a believer in God; for among the Roman soldiery there was quite a number who had embraced the Jewish faith.

Jesus replied to the centurion: "*I will come and heal him.*" The centurion had not besought Jesus to come to his house, nor, as will appear, had he any intention of doing so; but Jesus, to show His good will and to afford an occasion to the centurion to make the magnificent profession of humble

faith, which we shall soon hear, said: "*I will come and heal him.*" When we reflect that Jesus, the Son of God and Lord of all, shows Himself so condescending to one who makes a request of Him, doing more than is asked, and expressing a readiness to go to the bedside of a poor sick servant, we should all, laymen and priests, feel the hot blush of shame mantling our cheeks—we poor creatures, who refuse a request so easily, who are so careful of ourselves, so exacting toward others, and so full of presumption.

The honest centurion was amazed at such kindness; he regretted he had put Our Lord to so much inconvenience, and, feeling that he was not worthy to receive such a guest into his house, bowing down before Him, He said: "*Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant shall be healed.*" What faith and humility, what candor and generosity of heart in this pagan and foreign soldier! Such sentiments, so noble and so publicly avowed, were not possible to the Scribes and Pharisees; they were too proud. In spite of their knowledge, their prophets, and their scrupulous observance of the Law, and because of their pride and malignity, they remained at a distance from Jesus Christ; while this centurion, a Gentile and a soldier, because he was humble and sincere, believed in Him, and was privileged to have his words solemnly repeated daily by the lips of priests through all the centuries and in every country of the world. Such is the glory that was reserved for the good Gentile centurion.

But, not satisfied with this humble and heartfelt declaration, he went on to explain his reason for making it, which he illustrated by a simile drawn from his profession of a soldier.

"You see," he said to Jesus, "I also am constituted in authority and I have under me a hundred soldiers, and I say to one: Go, and he goes; and to another: Come, and he comes; and I have a servant, and if I say to him: Do this, he does it; now if it is sufficient for me to say a single word to be obeyed, will it not be much easier for you to heal my servant by saying a single word? Why should you move a single step? Why come to my house? Say only one word and my servant shall be healed."

Certainly Jesus could not be surprised, since surprise is possible only in one who sees or hears something strange or unusual, and to Jesus nothing could be strange or unusual; still St. Matthew says that Jesus was surprised, in this accommodating Himself to our weakness and to the condition of our nature. *"And Jesus hearing this marveled, and said to them that followed Him: Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel."* The centurion, as we have said, was a Gentile, but in faith he surpassed the children of Israel. This splendid exhibition of faith on the part of the centurion afforded Jesus an opportunity to make two remarkable prophecies, one concerning the Gentiles and the other concerning the Hebrews.

"And I say to you that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of

heaven.'' As much as to say: ''This centurion is a Gentile; he is the first fruits of the Gentiles who shall come into My kingdom, and enter into My Church, and be of the children of Abraham and of the patriarchs.'' In this prophecy Jesus clearly foretells the conversion of the Gentiles. And what of the Hebrews? With a troubled countenance and a sigh that came from the very depth of His soul Jesus added: ''But the children of the kingdom, those who were first called to the Faith, shall be cast out into exterior darkness, thrust out of the house and from the feast, where all is light and brightness; and outside the house and banquet hall, there shall be only sorrow and intense grief, so intense that only the gnashing of teeth can give an idea of it.''

Whenever I read these words of prophecy strange thoughts come to me. The children of Israel, who were already in the house of the Lord, were cast out because of their pride and unbelief, and the Gentiles, our forefathers, entered in.

My friends, let us be candid; is it not true that many among us have turned our back on Jesus Christ and on His Church and reject and blaspheme the Faith He preached? Is it not true that many of our brethren live as if they were not Christians? They never listen to a word concerning God, His sacraments, or the precepts of the Church. Here in the very midst of our Christian and Catholic surroundings, I know not why, men, I do not say all, seem so to weary and tire of religion and its practices; the very thought causes pain and excites fear. Some of those who have acquired wealth and the refinement that is

its ordinary accompaniment, do not seem to care for religion or to appreciate its blessings. They are like the Sadducees of the Synagogue, who believed in nothing, neither in Moses nor the prophets. On the other hand the annals of the propagation of the Faith attest that many peoples, who were in the darkness of paganism, have received the light, entered into the Church and given proof of a faith rivaling that of the apostolic age. They go as many as a hundred miles to confession and holy communion, to assist at Mass and hear a missionary preach, and we, who have only to go a few steps to enjoy these privileges, care nothing for them! May not God weary of our thanklessness, abandon us, and call others in our place, more faithful than we and more grateful for His favors? God banish the thought; still, let us not delude ourselves; there is reason enough for fear and trembling.

"*Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.*" The faith of the centurion had its reward; without entering the house where the sick man was, Jesus by a simple act of His will healed the servant, as the centurion had requested.

My friends, faith is the root of justification, the root of the Christian life; it is the source of everything, and without it, it is impossible to please God. Let us guard it well and revive it by the word of God, by prayer, and the sacraments, and by doing works of charity.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

HOMILY XVII

BRETHREN: Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For thou shalt not commit adultery: thou shalt not kill: thou shalt not steal: thou shalt not bear false witness: thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The love of our neighbor worketh no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* xiii. 8-10.

THE words of the Epistle just read are taken from the thirteenth chapter of that of St. Paul to the faithful of Rome. The passage is very short, consisting of only three verses. But if the words are few they are packed full of meaning. The Apostle in these few lines has given us a compendium of the whole law, as he himself expressly says: *"Love is the fulfilling of the law."* The subject which we are about to meditate on is important, brings joy to every good heart, and of its very nature claims your attention.

"Owe no man anything but to love one another." These words may be put into this form: Our whole duty consists in loving one another. In going through the pages of the New Testament we find no precept more frequently or more urgently insisted upon than that of brotherly love. Jesus Christ calls it a *new* precept, because before Him

it was never so clearly laid down or carried to such a height of perfection; and He calls it *His* precept, because none other was so dear to His heart or so well expressed the nature and character of the law of the Gospel, for, as He affirmed, its observance would be a mark by which His disciples would be known. It is not to be wondered at, then, that St. Paul here reduces all the duties of a Christian to love of his brethren. But here a difficulty naturally presents itself. How is it possible that all the duties of a Christian can be reduced to the love we should mutually bear one another?

St. Jerome tells us that St. John, when he was past ninety and living at Ephesus, was carried in the arms of his disciples into the church as often as the people assembled there, and was always asked to speak to them. The holy old man said no more than repeat to them over and over these words: "My children, love one another." The disciples wearying of hearing always the same words, said to him: "Master, why do you always say this?" He replied, says St. Jerome, in a way worthy of him: "Because it is the Lord's precept, and if it alone is fulfilled, it is enough."[1]

The reply of so great an apostle and the commentary of so great a Doctor would relieve me of the necessity of giving any further explanation; still it may be well to speak of the subject somewhat at length, and to begin a little way back, let us inquire first of all what is meant by brotherly love.

Does it mean that feeling, common to all, which more or less compels us to love our neighbor; that

[1]Ecclesiastical writers.

tenderness which we feel toward our kind and which causes compassion for those who suffer to spring up in our hearts? Certainly this is a worthy feeling and does honor to our nature; this tenderness, this compassion for those who suffer, is a gift of God and a characteristic of noble souls. But the brotherly love enjoined by the Gospel is not this. This feeling of tenderness and compassion is not necessarily associated with good works. How many feel keenly, or seem to, the misfortunes of others, and while profuse in expressions of sympathy are niggardly in deeds?

Sylla was a monster of tyranny, one of the worst of whom history leaves us a record, and yet when at a theater he would weep as a child during the representation of some touching scene. He was affected by an exhibition of imaginary grief, while causing torrents of tears and blood to flow.

I have seen avaricious men show distress at the sight of the miseries of the destitute and yet refuse to give a single farthing in alms.

Again, is the brotherly love commanded by Jesus Christ that sentiment which inspires us to love our brother for his good and gracious endowments, for the favors we receive from him, for the rewards which we hope from him, and for the pleasure we feel in serving him?

I would not find fault with this love, which may be naturally a good love, but it does not embrace all men, because all are not endowed with good and pleasing qualities, nor do we receive favors from all, nor do we hope for them from all, neither is the pleasure which we feel in loving them and serving them enduring and satisfying; and even

if it were, the motive is purely human, and hence weak and vacillating.

What, then, is the brotherly love which includes in itself the fulfilling of all our duties?

It is that which is kindled in the heart, which permeates our whole being, which wells up from every fiber of the soul, which makes us feel as our own another's good or evil fortune, which reveals itself and finds expression in works, which moves us to aid the needy and the distressed in as far as we are able, which, in fine, is rooted in reason and fed by faith and by the love of God. This is the brotherly love that stands any test and that is the summing up or abridgment of the fulfilling of all our duties.

I must love my neighbor, and why? Because God, who created me, created him; because God preserves him, because God has engraven His own image upon him, and loves him as a father loves a son. I must love my neighbor because the Son of God became man for him as well as for me; because He suffered and died for him as well as for me; because Jesus Christ offers him His grace, and has stamped, or is ready to stamp upon his soul the mark of son of God, and because He calls him to the possession of eternal life with Himself. I must, in a word, love my brother, because God wishes me to do so, because Jesus Christ commands it, because he is my brother by nature and grace, and because as God manifests His love for my brother in works, so like unto Him I must do the same. Such is the love of our neighbor according to the Gospel.

This love of our neighbor, which wells up from a

deep and pure fountain, contains in itself all the qualities and notes which make it perfect.

It is *universal,* inasmuch as it includes every man, since there is no man to whom the above motives do not apply. Be they Catholics, heretics, or schismatics, Hebrews or pagans, they are the work of the hands of God, and Jesus Christ died for them all.

The character of *universality* in its widest sense belongs alone to brotherly love as taught by the Gospel. Outside of Christianity there is a love of one's neighbor, a family love, a tribal and national love, but not a love that extends to all mankind; it embraces some but not all, and its motive for the most part is sympathy, or gratitude, or hope.

Again, this love is *continuous* and *perpetual,* because, as is clear, the motives that kindle and feed it are continuous and ceaseless; nor can they cease for a single instant, since they are to be sought, not in men nor in their merits, but in God, in the Redeemer, and in His will, and therefore they are not subject to change of any sort.

Hence, the love that springs from such motives, is not only *universal* and *continuous;* it is *equal* for all, in the sense just explained. It is an equal and an indiscriminate love, because although it may and must vary in intensity in proportion to the closeness of the ties by which we are bound to our neighbor, still, like creation and redemption, it extends to all without exception.

What does it matter that this one is poor, rude, and ignorant, or that another is ungrateful, vicious, and wicked, or that a third hates me, abuses me, and persecutes me ferociously? I shall

deplore his conduct and condemn his actions, but I shall continue to love him, because he is the handiwork of God and the conquest of Jesus Christ. My love has God and Jesus Christ for its object and God and Jesus Christ never change. This is the secret that explains Christian charity; this is why missionaries and Sisters abandon their family, quit their native country, and busy themselves in hospitals and asylums, traverse seas, go among barbarians, savages, and cannibals to teach them, to civilize them, and to die for them and with them.

Now the love of our neighbor, as we have explained it, should reveal itself in two ways: first, we should not say or do anything that can displease or harm our neighbor; and we should, in as far as we may, do and say what pleases him and may be to his advantage. Thus the Apostle, wishing to show that all our duties toward our neighbor are summed up in charity, says: "*For thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment it is comprised in this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" Whosoever truly loves his neighbor as himself perfectly fulfils the law, does evil to none, and, as far as he can, does good to all. The absolute affirmation of St. Paul, which follows the above words, is therefore true: "*Love is the fulfilling of the law.*"

But, some one may say, have we not duties toward ourselves and toward God? These duties are not included in love of our neighbor. How, then, could the Apostle say: "*Love of our neighbor is*

the fulfilling of the law?" Certainly, we can say that as the love of God impels us to fulfil the duties which refer to God, so does the love of our neighbor impel us to fulfil all the duties we have toward our neighbor. But it would seem that the precept may be understood in another sense; namely, that he who truly loves God should will what God wills, and, therefore, he must love his neighbor as God loves him and as God commands that he shall be loved. The love of our neighbor is certainly included in the love of God, as the effect is included in the cause. But is the love of God also included in the love of one's neighbor? In a sense, yes, since it is impossible to have an active, abiding love for our neighbor, to love all without exception, and to be ready to make sacrifices for them, even when they hate us and are ungrateful, unless God aids us and loves us and unless we see Him and love Him in our neighbor.

St. John says: *"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God abideth in us, and His charity is perfected in us."*[1] How can it be said that God is loved in man? Whosoever loves the image of God, loves God Himself, and man is truly the living image of God on earth. Let us, then, love God and we shall love our neighbor; let us love our neighbor, as we should, and we shall love God, because these two loves can not be rent asunder.

[1] 1. iv. 12.

HOMILY XVIII

AT THAT time, when He entered into the boat, His disciples followed Him: and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awakened Him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them, Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up He commanded the winds, and the sea; and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying, what manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?—GOSPEL, *Matt.* viii. 23-27.

HAVING healed the leper near Capharnaum, having cured the centurion's servant, and driven the fever from Peter's wife's mother, Jesus Christ entered into a boat, and from there, as St. Mark says,[1] taught the crowds that were gathered along the shore of the Lake of Genesereth or Tiberias, called by the Hebrews a sea. And when He had finished and dismissed the crowds, He set out to go across to the opposite shore of the lake. While crossing that lake the event happened which I have narrated to you, and this is the subject we shall now consider for our mutual benefit.

"*When Jesus entered into the boat His disciples followed Him; and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves.*" This is the fact, and it needs no explanation; but instead I shall remind you of a teaching of the Fathers, and one, too, which has its foundation in

[1] iv. 1, 2.

Sacred Scripture, namely, that there are facts narrated in Holy Writ, which we must accept with the fullest faith, as having really taken place, and which are intended to signify other facts and to teach other truths. Thus we must believe that Isaac really went up on the mountain, carrying wood for the holocaust, as Holy Scripture says; but we must also believe that Isaac in so doing was a figure of Jesus Christ, who went up to Mount Calvary, carrying the wood of the cross. We can apply this principle to the Gospel fact which we are now considering.

The narrative tells us of the boat into which Jesus entered with His disciples, and of the sea and of the storm that arose. Of what is the boat a symbol? It is a symbol of the Church in which are Jesus Christ and His disciples. Of what is the sea a symbol? Of this present life, which alternates between storm and calm. And what does the storm that arose signify? It signifies the troubles, the trials, and the persecutions which the Church has sustained from century to century.

Now, what is said of the Church may be said in a measure of every soul in which Jesus Christ dwells by faith and grace, and which is voyaging on the sea of this world, a sea now in calm and now in tempest. The boat that sailed on Lake Tiberias is a striking image of the history of the Church and of every Christian soul. The Church sets out from the shores of this world and sails away on her heavenward voyage; within her are Jesus Christ and His apostles in the persons of His Vicar and the bishops, and the faithful follow them.

She can never be shipwrecked; but she is never free from the storms and tempests raised by the passions of men, by enemies from within and from without, and these are more or less violent as time and place may determine. Bear well in mind, my dear friends, that Jesus Christ never promised His Church an enduring peace; on the contrary, He foretold that she would suffer all sorts of persecutions; that the gates, or the powers of hell, would make incessant war upon her, and that she would always come victorious out of the conflict. Hence we should not be surprised at seeing her so often and so furiously assailed, now in one place and now in another, now in her Head and now in her members. This is a condition of her life. She may have intervals of peace, but never a continuing and enduring peace; she sails a sea that is more frequently than not the field and the sport of wind and storm; true and perfect peace she will have only when time will be no more and when she shall have cast her anchor in the secure and tranquil port of eternity. What is said of the Church, each one may apply to himself, and each should bear in mind that this life is a warfare, or a time in which peace and war necessarily alternate and succeed each other.

And why should God wish that His Church, like a vessel at sea, should be often lashed by these intermittent storms? Why does He wish or permit the same to happen to every soul that goes out upon the hazardous sea of life? Because, as war proves the valor of the soldier, so does conflict bring out into stronger light the divine strength of the Church; because trials impose eternal vig-

ilance, purify virtue, necessitate a recurrence to God, exercise patience, rekindle faith, increase hope, and furnish an opportunity to acquire merit. Stagnant water becomes impure and corrupt; confined air deteriorates and suffocates; prolonged peace enervates a soldier; while on the contrary, motion preserves water from corruption, a hurricane changes and purifies the air, war disciplines the soldier, and struggles strengthen and purify the Church and all her members.[1]

But let us go back to the boat, which was so fiercely buffeted by the wind on Lake Tiberias that, as the Evangelist tells us, it was covered with waves and in danger of going down. What did Jesus do in the meantime? *"He was,"* as St. Mark says, *"in the hinder part of the ship sleeping upon a pillow."* He was really sleeping, I think, and not merely seeming to do so. He was a perfect man and as man had human needs. He ate and drank, rested and slept, just as we do, and therefore it was quite natural that after the fatigue of preaching and a long day of toil He should yield to the cravings of nature and fall asleep. Certainly He saw the danger and fright of the apostles, though He slept on and did not seem to see or mind anything. Similarly, it sometimes happens that the Church is greatly oppressed and in extreme danger, and yet Jesus Christ allows things to go on and seems to sleep; it also happens

[1]Gubernatoris peritiam non probat temperies serena, sed procellosa tempestas; mare blandiente navim regit ultimus nauta, in confusionem ventorum quaeritur ars magistri (*Petrus Chrys.* Serm. ii). Gubernator in tempestate cognoscitur, in acie miles probatur. Adversa non avocant a fidei virtute, sed corroborant in dolore. Quanta sublimitas inter ruinas generis humani stare creatum.—St. Cyprianus, De Mortalitate.

at times that our souls are tossed to and fro by the incessant waves of adversity and temptation, and God seems to have forsaken us. Jesus seems to sleep. He wishes to force us to come to Him for aid and by our prayers share in the merit of the victory. And this is what the apostles did on Lake Tiberias.

Seeing that Jesus was sleeping tranquilly, at first they did not wish to wake Him, but when the fury of the storm increased and the waves grew threatening, and it became impossible to manage the boat with oars and rudder, seeing death staring them in the face, they went to Jesus and waking Him, cried out: *"Master, save us or we perish."* This is one of the most valuable fruits of afflictions and great dangers. Seeing that we are unequal to the conflict, we come to know ourselves better, we feel the need of divine aid, and impelled by faith and hope we cast ourselves down in God's presence and give ourselves to prayer. Tribulations and sorrows and temptations lift us up above this world and carry us on to God.

The apostles went to Jesus and begged Him to save them from imminent danger of death. Let us imitate them whenever the storms of temptation and affliction agitate and threaten the vessel of our soul; let us cry out and let our prayer be that of the apostles: *"Lord, save us or we perish."*

And Jesus said to them: *"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith."* Why this reproof? The apostles threw themselves at the feet of Jesus and begged Him with all the intensity of their soul to save them from death, and still He reproves them

for being excessively timid and men of little faith. Should they have abstained from praying and have waited until everything was cast into the sea? Why, then, this reproof? Jesus reproved them for being over-timid, for being overcome by fear, whereas, being with Him who could not perish, they should not have feared at all. It was their slowness in recognizing His divinity, their excessive dread, and their lack of faith that Jesus reproved in the apostles. Whenever we pray to be freed from the evils of the body, let us always be calm, resigned to the divine will, and full of filial trust in God.

"*Jesus rising up commanded the winds and the sea and there came a great calm.*" It seems clear that Jesus spoke to the winds and to the sea, and St. Luke says that He rebuked them, speaking as giving an absolute command, He being Lord of all; and suddenly the winds ceased to blow and the lake became tranquil, so that it was clearly apparent that all this was an effect of the will of Jesus Christ. As Jesus then caused the tempest on the lake to cease, when He was besought to do so, so will He now, if we but ask Him, dissipate the winds and storms that disturb and threaten His Church and trouble our soul, if to do so will be for the good either of His Church or of us.

My friends, we have many failings to reproach ourselves with on account of the way in which we appeal to God in our needs.

Some when pressed by their spiritual enemies, or when their passions rise in revolt, do not bother at all to look to God for aid, or they ask it in a feeble, languid, half-hearted way. These fall, be-

cause without God's aid they can do nothing, and ordinarily this aid is granted to those only who ask it in prayer. When, therefore, temptation comes upon us and pursues us, let us raise our minds to God, and with living faith ask Him for aid and aid will come to us.

There are others again who in the trials of life, in their temporal troubles, in sickness, and in public and private calamities, go to the steps of the altar, pray, make pilgrimages, fast, and ask God absolutely and without condition to hear them. Such as these confuse things badly. When there is question of the saving of our soul, or of spiritual favors absolutely necessary to us, then our prayers may and should be absolute, because such prayers God is obliged to hear; but we should never prescribe to God the time or the way of granting them.

But when there is question of temporal goods, our prayer should always be a conditional prayer, since it may be that what we ask is either not pleasing to God or harmful to our soul's salvation. Let us be careful to avoid these defects of which even good people are frequently guilty.

"Men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?" Those who were thus amazed at sight of the miracles were the apostles, and likely also those who followed them in small boats. And we may believe that, not only were they amazed at the miracle, but they gave heartfelt thanks to Jesus for having saved them from death, recognized Him as the long-looked-for Messias, and adored Him.

My friends, among men gratitude for favors is a sacred duty; how much more should it be a sacred duty to God whenever He grants us favors, and He is always and everywhere heaping benefits upon us. Gratitude for favors received is the best means of gaining other and greater ones.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

HOMILY XIX

BRETHREN: Put ye on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection; and let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body: and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.—EPISTLE, *Col.* iii. 12-17.

ST. PAUL was twice confined in prison, once in Cesarea in Palestine, and again in Rome. In Cesarea in Palestine he was imprisoned from the year sixty-three to the year sixty-five of our era, and it is most likely that from there he wrote the Letter to the faithful of Colosse, a city of Asia Minor.

The six verses, which I have just read to you and which deal wholly with moral subjects, are taken from the third chapter of this Epistle. They are simple and practical, nothing could be more so, and well worth being considered.

"*Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience.*" St. Paul, writing to his dear children calls them the *elect* of God, or those chosen specially by God in preference to many others to receive the gift of faith. How many were then buried in the darkness of Paganism, and still the faithful of Colosse were illumined with the light of the Gospel truth. Wherefore the difference? It was the goodness of God that first chose them and called them, and they, using the grace given them, answered to the call. They were chosen and called to be saints.

It is worth our while to consider for an instant the nature and incomparable worth of the election of which St. Paul here speaks.

Before one begins any work whatever he should first think out what he is about to do, then he should make up his mind or will to do it, and finally he should set about doing it. God wishes to save all men, and therefore necessarily He first thinks of them; next, he furnishes the means by which they may save themselves; and, finally, He gives them the means and the grace, or rather the series of graces, necessary for the purpose. In the work of our salvation then, the first act on the part of God is to direct His thought to us; and the second, to determine His will to grant us the necessary grace. Now, may I ask, what is there in us to move God to think of us, and to will to call us to Himself, and to grant us His grace? We were not, and God from all eternity looked mercifully upon us and loved us; we did not do, and we could not do, a single act, antecedent to His grace, be-

cause God's grace is necessary to do such an act. Can a field that has not been sown produce a harvest; or can an eye see where there is no light? Our election and vocation, then, of which St. Paul speaks, is wholly a gift of God, without any merit of ours whatever.

St. Paul frequently calls the faithful *saints,* although we may take it for granted that all of them were not truly such; he calls them *saints,* because they were new-born in Baptism, because they were the disciples of Him who is *the Saint* by excellence, and because the end of their calling, to acquire which they should exert every effort, is sanctity. We see then, my friends, the height and sublimity of our profession as Christians; we ought to be saints, that is, cut off from every wayward affection to things here below and wholly given to the service of God.

You are elect and you are saints, says St. Paul, and, he adds, well *beloved,* or, like sons, dear unto God. What a joy for us to be able to say: "I am beloved of God, I am dear to Him, as dear as a son to a father."

The elect of God, the saints, and the well beloved, St. Paul goes on, "*should put on the bowels of mercy, benignity, modesty, patience;*" that is, we should be like unto God and Jesus Christ our Head, and therefore most compassionate and charitable toward every form of suffering; we should be, not harsh, severe, and rude, but affable and kind to all, and we shall be so if we are humble of heart, because humility is the mother of benignity and modesty, and of that patience which signifies longanimity, or the patience that never

tires and is at all times benevolent and gentle.

And how shall we practise these virtues that bind us so closely together? St. Paul tells us: "*By bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another.*" There is no one, it matters not how holy, who has not his faults. By necessity of our nature we must live together, in families and in society, and we are always coming more or less in contact one with another. Now, how is it possible for us to live together if we are not ready to bear with one another's defects and pardon the offenses which sometimes we all unwittingly give one another? If we do not bear with one another and forgive one another's faults, life will become intolerable and we shall be continually at war. But how shall we bear with one another and forgive one another? Jesus Christ, St. Paul says, is our sovereign model. "*Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also.*" Jesus Christ, the Man-God, is and ever will be the pattern whom all men of faith must always keep before their eyes and they must copy into themselves His unspeakable perfections. Likeness unto Jesus Christ is the measure of every virtue, and the more we approach this incomparable model the more exalted will be our virtue. Hence the Apostle in all his Letters puts Jesus before us in every possible form, and so here he says: "*As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also.*" He forgave His enemies and those who crucified Him, He even prayed for them and died for them, and shall we His children, poor, miserable creatures and sinners, refuse to

forgive those who have offended us? It is impossible.

The Apostle always insists on one virtue, the queen of all others. He says: *"But above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection."* As the soul gives life to the body, holds all its various members together, gives them motion and strength, so charity gives life and movement and strength to all other virtues, binds them all together, and tends wonderfully to the peace and stability of the family and of society.

The most precious fruit of charity is *"The peace of Christ, wherein you are called in one body, and which rejoices your hearts"*; not the deceitful peace of this world, but true peace, the peace that Christ brought on earth, the peace to which He has called us all by making us members of His Church; and let this tranquil peace reign in and rejoice our hearts, welling up from thence and going forth, the inspiration of our words and the motive of our actions. What a treasure is this peace, this tranquillity of spirit and heart, which we possess even in the midst of the troubles of life! Let us be thankful for it to Jesus Christ whose gift it is.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly in all wisdom." Let the word or the doctrine, or the Gospel of Christ, which has come to us by preaching, abide in our hearts and fill us with all true wisdom. Do you understand the teaching of St. Paul, my brethren? His meaning is that we shall not only hear the word of the Gospel, but that it shall dwell in us, abide with us in great fulness, so that it may be to us a light to

guide our footsteps along the path of virtue and a rule to regulate our thoughts and affections.

And as a help to preserve and increase in us the knowledge of the Gospel, "*teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles.*" From these words of St. Paul it is clear that in the early Church the custom of singing psalms and hymns was common in the gatherings of the faithful. They thus recalled to memory the truths of faith, brought them more vividly home to themselves, and got a clearer insight into their meaning. Singing, like laughter, is natural to man. Once he clearly apprehends the truth, the heart is aflame with the thought of the greatness and goodness of God and of His bounty, and the tongue unconsciously breaks forth in song, praising and blessing Him, giving Him thanks, and extolling His name. The soul is then like a censer from which a sweet perfume goes up to heaven; or like a flower, that opens its chalice, unfolds its leaves, and, warmed by the rays of the sun, fills the air with its fragrance. When engaged in divine worship the soul of man not only feels the need of sacred song to relieve itself and give vent to the depth and intensity of its feeling, but song is an aid to revive and increase this flame in his own soul and in those of others.

When the vaults of the Church ring with the singing of a whole congregation, their voices mingling with the notes of the organ, my heart is moved, my spirit is exalted, and my soul rises up to God; a holy and sweet intoxication sweeps over me and I feel a joy that is not of earth but of heaven. St. Augustine, while listening at Milan

to the congregation singing the Psalms, burst into tears of joy, and cried out: "How good is the Lord to those who love Him."

The last verse of the Epistle is this: "*And whatsoever you do in word or in work, do ye all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Who is able to know and remember all the works and words, all the thoughts and affections of a single day? They are beyond count. Let us say that they are all irreprehensible, all good, or at any rate indifferent. The worth or the merit of all these works and words, of all these thoughts and affections, very largely depends on the intention we have in doing them; if this is always directed to God, then by it and through it all is done for His honor, all acquires a special value, and our whole life becomes one offering, one incessant hymn which we offer up to Him. Why, then, do we not follow the precept or the counsel of the Apostle and offer up all our words and works to God? You will say that it is next to impossible, amid a thousand occupations and distractions, to do this. But is it impossible at the end of your morning prayers to include all the words and works of the day in a general intention and offer them up in advance to God? Surely not. Very well, then; this morning offering will be sufficient, and will give to all your words and works, even to the indifferent ones, though the thought does not occur to you at the time, the merit of the intention, just the same as if you should make it at every act. Whether you labor in the field or in the shop, whether you run or walk, eat or drink, rest or play,

all will be done to the glory of God and all will be meritorious in His sight. Therefore, my friends, at the dawn of day, when you say your morning prayers, say also with lips and heart: "My Lord, I am about to begin another day, a day which Thou hast given me. Hence, whatever I do or say, whatever I think or suffer from this instant I offer all to Thee, in union with the words of Jesus Christ and with the works which He did during His mortal life." As the sun in rising above the horizon floods all objects with light and beauty, so your morning intention will consecrate and sanctify all the words and works of the entire day.

And why can you not at intervals throughout the day in the midst of your labors, in workshop or field, raise your mind and heart to God and renew your intention? You will find a comfort in doing so, you will feel your faith revived and your strength renewed. The thought of God is like an electrical spark; it diffuses light and warmth through the soul; it is as a soft breeze that caresses a flower, opens its heart, and spreads its fragrance abroad. Yes, my friends, lift your heart and mind often to God and the way of virtue will be easy and pleasant.

HOMILY XX

At that time Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle.

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And the servants of the good man of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No; lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle and bind it in bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.—Gospel, *Matt.* xiii. 24-30.

This parable, one of the most beautiful and simple to be found in the Gospel, Jesus Christ Himself deigned to explain in detail. The word "parable" literally means the curve which a body thrown upward describes in falling to the earth; and because in thus throwing a body upward and in its fall there is the idea of one thing approaching another, the usage was introduced to signify by the word *parable* that similitude which the mind discovers between a fact and a doctrine. Hence a parable is nothing more than a fact, which suggests or leads to the knowledge of a truth, between which and it there is a similarity or affinity easily detected. It is an easy and most effective way of teaching the people; it clothes a truth in sensible form and thus deeply impresses it on the mind. The use of parables is very frequent in the Gospels, especially in that of St. Matthew, and they give to the teaching of Jesus Christ a character of simplicity, a singular clearness, and a gracious and wonderful charm not to be found in

any other book, whether ancient or modern. Let us now go on to the explanation of the parable which we have from the lips of our Saviour Himself.

"*The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field.*" The words, "*The kingdom of heaven,*" may mean heaven or the future life, or the Church, or the kingdom of grace in each of us. Here they simply mean: It is with the kingdom of heaven as with a field that is sown.

In this parable there is the sower, the field that is sowed, the cockle, the enemy who oversowed the cockle, the servants or harvesters, the harvest, and the barn or granary. The sower is Jesus Christ, the field that is sowed is the world, the good seed are the righteous, the cockle are the wicked, the enemy is the devil, the harvesters are the angels, the harvest is the end of the world, and the granary is evidently heaven, though Jesus Christ does not expressly say so. This is the explanation which Jesus Christ Himself gave, at the request of the apostles. The parable is a summary of the history of the human race from its origin to the end of time. And now let us go on to the explanation of the parable in detail.

"*A man sowed good seed in his field.*" God created the world and, when He had it properly prepared, He created man and formed woman and introduced them into it as a king is conducted into his palace. And these are the good seed which the man of the house sowed in his field and which were to increase and cover it with a plentiful harvest. The first couple were adorned with every grace

and every most perfect gift, and these they were to transmit to their children. But what happened? *"While men were asleep his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way."* How are the words: *"While men were asleep,"* to be understood? We know that sometimes portions of a parable are added to give beauty to the sentence and are not necessary for the application of the parable itself, and here the words: *"While men were asleep"* may be so considered. Still we may say that the fall of our first parents was caused by their culpable negligence in allowing themselves to be deceived by the devil, their enemy, who sowed in them and in their children the bad seed of sin. From that day until the end of time the good grain has been and will be mingled with the cockle, good men with bad.

Here it is to be specially noted that the parable attributes the appearance of evil on the earth and the origin of sin, not to God, but to the devil, to His enemy and ours, the primal worker of all our evils; this is a capital point of our faith. God created man good; the devil caused him to become bad; this is the explanation of the enemy who oversowed cockle among the good grain.

"And when the blade was sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle," that is, when the wheat began to head, then the cockle[1] appeared, which, though coming up later, frequently outstrips the grain.

And here let us make a simple observation.

[1]The word *zizzania* was unknown to the Latins and seems to be of Arabic origin. The Latin word is *lolium*, meaning tares or cockles, and Virgil sang: Infelix lolium et steriles dominantur avenae.

Good grain never comes up in a field unless it is sowed by the hand of man, nor does it grow and thrive unless it is cultivated by man; while weeds shoot up and take deep root without man's aid and in spite of all he can do to prevent their growth. Thus grace, faith, and virtue never spring up in the heart of man unless God puts them there; while passion and sin germinate there of themselves.

"The servants of the good man of the house coming, said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it cockle?" These servants who went to the master of the house and informed him that cockle had appeared among the good grain, are introduced to give greater beauty and dramatic effect to the parable, since the owner of the field, that is, God Himself, was not dependent on others for this information.

"And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it." In these last words is contained the substance and the most important teaching of the parable, and it may be well to dwell upon them for a moment.

Grain and cockle grow in the same field and their roots get so interwoven that it is almost impossible to pull up those of the cockle without also disturbing and breaking those of the good grain, and hence the master wished them left just as they were. Consider also that the cockle is not spared for its own sake, but solely for sake of the wheat; it is left until the harvest that the wheat may profit

thereby. As we have said, the cockle represents the wicked and the wheat the righteous; it is therefore manifest that it is God's will that the just and the wicked shall be mingled together.[1] This is a fact which we have constantly before our eyes, and it is frequently an occasion of complaint and scandal to the just.

One of the greatest sorrows of the good in this world is to be obliged to live with the wicked, to listen to their evil speech, to witness their evil deeds, and too frequently to endure their tyranny both at home and in public. Why, then, has the good and all-powerful God willed and arranged things so? Why does He permit a condition of things so trying to the good? Why does He will that the cockle shall grow up together with the wheat and why does He forbid the cockle to be rooted out? True, the association of the wicked may do great harm to the virtuous by perverting their faith and corrupting their morals, but, everything considered, the good outweighs the evil, and so God has wisely ordained that things should be as they are.

First of all, God wills all men to be saved, even the most hardened sinners, and how does He set about to convert and save them? One of the most efficient means is their association with the just,

[1]Certainly Our Lord did not by this parable intend to teach that the wicked and the good should be treated alike and have equal rights. This would have been to teach that thieves, assassins, and homicides should not be imprisoned and punished, which would be absurd. If I mistake not, Jesus meant only to say that in the present condition of things there will always be bad men in the world and in the Church, who can not be got rid of by society, with whom it is necessary to live, and whom we must tolerate, or rather, toward whom we must exercise fraternal charity.

who by word and example and in many other ways, teach, correct, and convert them. Now and then the wicked corrupt the good, but it is always through the good that the wicked are brought to repent. Through St. Ambrose, St. Augustine was brought to the Faith, and St. Monica converted her husband, Patricius; the wife by her patience brought back to God her unbelieving husband, and the disconsolate mother by her winning and loving manner recalled her dissolute son to the path of virtue. This is why God wills that the wicked shall live with the just, that by the aid of the latter the former may be converted. The wheat can not change the cockle into good grain, but the virtuous by the aid of divine grace may change the depraved into saints.

Again, suffering is the food of virtue. As steel is sharpened with the file, so does suffering nourish and purify virtue. Association with the bad is a continuous occasion of trial for the good, and therefore a continuous exercise of patience and charity, and, I will add, of merit. If there were no tyrants there would be no martyrs. If there were no wars there would be no opportunity for the soldier to display his bravery. If all men were believers and virtuous this world would be a paradise; virtue would cost little or no effort and there would be little merit in practising it.

Finally, the sight of the wicked living among us makes us conscious of our misery and keeps us humble; obliges us to be constantly on our guard and to exercise prudence; makes us feel the need of continually having recourse to God and of exercising charity, the queen of virtues.

Moreover, if there were no wicked on the earth the good would be exposed to other dangers, and therefore it was with a serious purpose that Jesus Christ said: *"No, lest perhaps in gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest."* Let us, then, my friends, bear with the company of the wicked, try to lead them back to God, suffer with patience the afflictions they cause us, and pray for them.

Will the wicked, then, go unpunished? Will the lot of the good and the wicked be the same? Listen to what Our Lord says: *"In the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn."* Thus at the end of time the good will be absolutely and irrevocably separated from the wicked; the wicked will be cast as grass, as withered branches and cockle into the fire to burn for all eternity; and the good will be gathered as wheat into the granary, and given a place forever in heaven.

My dear friends, both by necessity of our condition and by the will of God we are all, good and bad, obliged to live together on this earth; if we are of the good, let us endeavor to keep ourselves so and employ every possible means to win the wicked back to God; if we are of the bad, we have no time to lose; let us change ourselves from cockle into good grain, so that we may escape everlasting fire and be at last welcomed into heaven.

Septuagesima Sunday

HOMILY XXI

BRETHREN: Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things, and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run, not as an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway. For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud, and in the sea: and did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink: (and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ), but with the most of them God was not well pleased.—EPISTLE, 1 *Cor.* ix. 24-27; x. 1-5.

SUCH is the Epistle of this Sunday, known as Septuagesima, so called because it is the seventh before Passion Sunday, when the Church begins to celebrate the great mysteries of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The passage just read is taken from the end of the ninth chapter and the beginning of the tenth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthi-

ans, written just before Pentecost[1] in the spring of the year fifty-four of our era. In it he earnestly exhorts the Corinthians to gain the eternal crown and not to be like the Israelites, who died in the desert without entering the promised land. Let us meditate upon it and profit by its lessons.

"*Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize.*" Corinth was the principal city of Achaia, a flourishing commercial center, celebrated for its works of art, and still more so for the dissolute morals of its people, which made its name a proverb throughout all the East. In this great center St. Paul founded a numerous Church, and having done so, he set forth on his apostolic mission and established himself for some time at Ephesus, whence he wrote two Letters to the Corinthians.

Near the city of Corinth were celebrated the great Isthmian games which attracted nearly all the people of Greece. Among these were races common in Greece, in which the winners received a crown and their names were held in honor by their countrymen. St. Paul, who was always quick and felicitous in turning to account whatever might serve to teach the faithful and illustrate the truth, made use of those famous games, so dear to the Corinthians, to bring home to them what was so near his own heart. You know, he says, that in your celebrated games very many go down into the arena and start in the race, hoping to reach the goal, but of these how many gain the crown? Only one; the efforts of the others are to no purpose. We Christians have also our course to run

[1] xvi. 6-8.

and our crown to gain; our course is the whole of this life, which Providence has granted us here on earth; this world is the arena for our combats, our place of trial, and our crown is the conquest of heaven, the possession of God Himself. So run that you may gain the prize. Let no one stop, or give way to sloth, or fail in his duty; let us all so run that we may reach the goal.

"*And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things.*" Those who entered the lists, whether for the races, or for contests in boxing or wrestling, or for any other trial of strength and skill, prepared themselves for the contest with the utmost care by exercising their body, anointing it, abstaining from certain articles of food, and eating others which were by no means to their liking. In a word these contestants submitted to many privations and underwent severe toil to gain a perishable crown, a crown in itself of little or no value and which only one could gain. If they suffered so much, the Apostle continues, and did so much for so beggarly a reward, what should not we Christians do to win a crown such as ours? Quite different from those contestants, only one of whom could gain a crown, we each can and should gain a crown and an imperishable one.

Like those athletes of old, and for a cause incomparably more noble than theirs, let us deny our body whatever may impede it or disqualify it for running and winning in the race of the Christian life; let us mortify our eyes, our ears, and our tongue, our appetite, our thoughts, and our entire body; let us cut ourselves off from all disorderly love of the things of earth, that thus unincumbered

and free we may be able to run along the way that leads to heaven and be victorious over the enemies that impede our progress, namely, the world, the devil, and the flesh. "You are not much of a soldier," says St. John Chrysostom, "if you think to conquer without a fight, or to triumph without a struggle. Put forth every effort, fight courageously, throw yourself intrepidly into the thick of the battle. Remember your compact, think of the stipulations, call to mind the demands of your warfare and the conditions on which you entered upon it."[1]

And here St. Paul, by a rapid transition, not rare with him, introduces himself as an example: *"I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air."* He brings forward the example of the Isthmian or Olympic contestants, and he rejoices that he does not act as they often do, running in the race and furiously struggling with one another in the arena, only to be overcome, losing both reward and glory. The Apostle of the Gentiles has a definite purpose, a most noble aim, which he is striving to gain: *"I chastise my body,"* he says, *"and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway."* He makes the body, which is the home of all the passions, subservient to the mind; he keeps a curb upon it, punishes it by fastings, and watchings, and penances, making it bear the cross, that it may be a submissive and a docile instrument in doing good works; because if he did not so deal with it, he himself, though an apostle, might have reason to fear

[1] Sermon on the martyrs.

for his salvation, lest having preached to others he himself might be lost.[1]

My friends, if the Apostle feared lest he should be of the number of the reprobate if he did not chastise his body and bring it into subjection, what have we to say, what have we to fear, we, who are so indulgent to our bodies and so readily yield to their cravings? Remember that the Gospel and the Epistles of the apostles tell us on every page and in the strongest language of the supreme necessity of the mortification of the body as an absolute condition to salvation; and yet how few there are who heed their teaching, and, what is more, how few practise it! Let us take this incontestable truth well to heart, that if we wish to save our souls, we must mortify our bodies.

The Apostle goes on, insisting on the reasonableness of his fear and the necessity of keeping himself faithful to his calling as a Christian. We have all been called to the Faith, he seems to say, and I even to the glory of the apostolate; we have all been baptized and illumined, sanctified by the sacraments, and nourished in the bosom of the Church. These are most precious blessings; but is all this enough to make secure our eternal salvation? Even after having received all these signal favors, could we miserably be lost? Yes, indeed, replies St. Paul: "*I would not have you ig-*

[1]Theologians ask whether or not St. Paul was certain of his own eternal predestination; I think he was and I base my judgment on verses 38 and 39 of the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. How, then, could he say that he feared if he did not bring his body into subjection that he would be among the reprobate? It may be said that he was certain of his predestination provided, as an antecedent condition, he did what he should do, that is, provided he carried out the designs of Providence.

norant, brethren," he says, *"that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all in Moses were baptized in the cloud and in the sea."*

Nay more, he adds: *"And all did eat of the same spiritual food and all drank of the same spiritual drink."* And still not all, very few, only two, in fact, entered into the promised land, and the same may yet happen to us children of the Gospel. It is not necessary to explain the clauses: *"All were under the cloud; all were baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea; all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink;"* since every one can see that they contain a reference to the cloud which covered the Israelites by day and was turned into a pillar of fire by night, to the passage of the Red Sea, and to the manna with which they were fed in the desert.

The cloud which changed into a pillar of fire by night, and still more strikingly the passage of the Red Sea, are symbols of Baptism, which is called the sacrament of light; and as the Israelites crossed safe and sound to the opposite shore of the Red Sea, and the Egyptian army and Pharaoh were buried in the waves, so does our soul rise new-born from the waters of Baptism and our sins remain submerged in them. Again, the food with which the Israelites were sustained in the desert, or the manna, is called a spiritual food, because it is a figure of the Holy Eucharist, the food of souls by excellence.

And not only were the Israelites nourished with the same spiritual food, but they *"drank of the same spiritual drink,"* or of the same miraculous

water which Moses caused to burst forth from the rock, and this water is a figure of divine grace, or rather, of the heavenly drink of the adorable blood of Jesus Christ. This water, the Apostle says, burst forth from the rock. The rock is a symbol of Jesus Christ, who was to come in the fulness of time, and who, as we should say, was a pilgrim with the people of Israel, from whom He derived His origin according to the flesh.

My dear friends, let us never forget that God's grace alone, His choicest gifts, and His most signal favors, will not of themselves save us, any more than did the most splendid miracles avail to lead the people of Israel back into the land of their fathers; but they will save us if we correspond with them, if to those gifts and favors we add our own efforts; for God, who created us without our co-operation, will not save us without it.

HOMILY XXII

At that time Jesus said to His disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the marketplace idle, and he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour: and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he

saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last; for many are called, but few chosen.—Gospel, *Matt.* xx. 1-16.

This parable is wonderfully true to nature and contains one of the most profound mysteries of our faith, namely, God's distribution of grace and man's correspondence with it by merit. To go through the parable word by word, as is our custom, would take too much time, and therefore, changing our method, we shall to-day, in speaking of the doctrine it contains, explain the parable as a whole, and then offer a few words of comment on the last two verses. To make clear the explana-

tion of the parable you should bear in mind that the householder represents God; the vineyard, the Church; the laborers, men; the day, the life of the human race on earth, or the life of each individual man; the evening, the end of time; and that the hire is the wages of labor, or the reward of eternal life. And now let us go on to explain the doctrine that Jesus Christ wished to teach us in this parable.

God created men and placed them on this earth that here in time they might sanctify themselves and merit a blessed life for all eternity. But what is necessary that men may work out their sanctification in time and merit a blessed life for eternity? On the part of God it is necessary that He should give grace to every man; a preventive grace, an illuminating grace, a grace that will move him and transform him into an adopted son. And on the part of man, what is necessary? It is necessary that he shall accept this grace, foster it, and co-operate with it. Then God, who is faithful to His promises, and just, will give to the man who has made His grace bear fruit by producing good works, life eternal and the possession of Himself. Hence life eternal, the possession of heaven, is the fruit of divine grace together with the works and the merits of man.

Now, my friends, I will ask you: Is God obliged to give to man grace, without which man can do nothing? Assuredly not. By what title would God be obliged to give His grace to man? What merit is there in man, or what right has he, that he should say to God: "Thou oughtest to give me Thy grace; I have a right, I a miserable creature,

to be adopted as Thy son." Man has not, nor can he have, any sort of merit, or any right to God's grace; faith and reason affirm this.

But if man has no right to God's grace by reason of his merit, which is itself the effect of grace, has he such a right by reason of the exigencies of his nature? Granted that God has created man so that he must have air to breathe and food to eat and drink to quench his thirst, and thus preserve and renew the forces of nature, it follows that man has a right to air and food and drink; but this right is not founded on his merits but on the exigencies of his nature. Is the reasoning the same with regard to grace? Is his nature so created that it demands grace as a necessary element, so that granted this exigency of his nature, the right to grace would follow as a necessary consequence? By no means, my friends. God could create nature without grace, because this is a gift to which nature has, and can have, no right. Have you, as man, a right to wings to fly, or a right to be a king? No, assuredly not. How, then, could you have a right to grace, which unites you to God and makes you His adopted son? Do not, then, speak of the rights of nature where grace is concerned, which is above and beyond all the exigencies of our nature.

But God solely of His own goodness wills to give His grace to all men, and promises it in the most solemn manner. Given this solemn promise by God, has man a right to it? Yes, he has, not because of his own merits, for he has none; nor because of his nature, between which and grace there is no proportion or necessary connection;

but because of the promise of God, who is faithful, provided man fulfils the conditions God has imposed.

God, having promised His grace to all men who fulfil the conditions laid down by Him, is He obliged to give it to all and to each in the same measure, at the same time, and in the same way? No, certainly not. He wishes all to be saved, and on His part, therefore, He should give grace to all; but the way of giving it, the time, the kind, the intensity, all this is a matter of His sovereign will and no one has a right to ask of Him a reason for what He does. This will ever remain to us here on earth an impenetrable mystery, which, if we have received more than others, should humble our pride and make us more grateful; and which, if we have received less, will not give us the shadow of a reason to complain.

Now you can understand the significance of the parable. The householder calls all those whom he finds on the streets and in the public squares to labor in his vineyard; none is excepted and the same reward is promised to all. Does he call all at once, or at the same hour, or in the same way? No, he calls some in the early morning, others at the third, sixth, and ninth hour, and others again at the tenth and eleventh, or at the close of the day.[1]

Could those men say that the householder had done an injustice? Could they say to him:

[1]The ancients divided the day and the night each into twelve equal parts. The third hour, then, meant that three hours of the day had passed; the sixth hour, that six had passed, which would correspond with our noon or midday, and so on; hence the eleventh hour of the day was an hour before night.

"You should have called us in the early morning, or at the third or at the eleventh hour?" The very thought is foolish. He has promised to call all, and He calls all, but He calls at the hour that suits Him and no one has a right to complain of His doing so. He calls the Hebrews first; afterward He calls the Gentiles; He calls Peter, Andrew, and the other apostles during the first days of His preaching; He calls Paul later, and still later He calls Cornelius, Timothy, and Dionysius, and so on; He calls one in infancy, another in boyhood, a third in manhood, and others when broken with age, and still others on the bed of sickness and in the last moments of life. He is the master of His grace; He gives to all what is necessary; to some He gives more, and with others He is profuse of His treasure. To some He gives five talents, to others He gives two, to others one. He wills that one shall be a simple layman, another a priest, and a third a bishop. He is the master of His gifts, and as St. Paul says, He distributes them to each as He wills: *Dividens singulis prout vult.* Who would venture to ask the reason for His doing so? No one.

Let us therefore, each and all, no matter when, or how, or by what means we are called, always reply: "Here we are ready to enter into the vineyard of the Lord;" and imitating the generosity of those who set to work last, let us not bargain about wages, but leave that all to the munificence of the master of the vineyard. Let us labor each according to his gifts and the time allowed him; and if we have lost time, let us try by laboring dili-

gently and with increased industry to regain it, redeeming the time, as St. Paul teaches.

This parable presents a difficulty, for it says that all the laborers, both those who worked only an hour, and those who worked the whole day, bearing the burden of the day and the heats, received the same pay, each a penny.[1] Why is this? Natural reason tells us that the pay should be according to the work. And Holy Writ teaches that God will render to every one according to his works. What, then, is the meaning of giving the same wages to each? The following seems to be the best and the only reply. The wage which the Householder gives to all alike is eternal life. In what does eternal life consist? In the beatific vision of God. And is this given to all who are saved? Undoubtedly. The prize or the reward which all alike possess is the same, namely God, and He is the same for all. But will the manner of enjoying the supreme Good and the measure of enjoyment be the same for all? No, this will be according to the greater or less merit of each. A thousand persons may admire a magnificent edifice, such as the cathedral of Milan; the object contemplated is the same for all; but the appreciation and the artistic relish will be different according to the intelligence, skill, or culture of each. Something similar will take place with regard to all the blessed in heaven; all will possess the same good, but their way of enjoying it will be different. The Gospel in saying that the reward of all the labor-

[1]This would equal about 16 cents of our money. This was then the ordinary day's wages of a laborer, and, considering the times and the purchasing value of money in those days, vastly greater than what it is now; it was a fair wage.

ers was the same, expresses the equality of the object possessed, or God, and the inequality in their mode of enjoying Him. The householder was right in saying to those who complained: "I do you no wrong; I give you what is coming to you; I give to each according to his capacity and what is sufficient to make him perfectly happy; what more can you ask?"

Moreover, those who began to work later might in the short time make up by hard labor for the time lost, and thus equal those who went to work earlier, and merit the same reward.

Possibly some may see a difficulty here. If the enjoyment of eternal bliss will be different according to the measure of grace and fidelity in co-operating with it, will there not spring up in the mind of some a desire for still greater enjoyment, and hence a distressing feeling of jealousy and envy?

Never, my friends, since each will possess all that the cravings of his nature demand, and he will be simply incapable of desiring greater happiness. Many guests sit down to a splendid feast, but the need of food, both as to kind and as to quantity, is different in each; some require more, some less. When all are satisfied, each according to his appetite and taste, they can not desire more food or drink, and so also the desire for greater enjoyment is impossible in the blessed in heaven.[1]

The Gospel concludes with two sentences which it is worth while to explain: "*So shall the last be*

[1]The poet-philosopher proposes this difficulty to himself and solves it admirably. See Canto iii. of The Paradise.

first, and the first last. For many are called but few are chosen.'' It is clear that the first sentence, which in part sums up the parable, refers to the Hebrews and to the Gentiles. The Hebrews were called first. To them the Law was given, to them the prophets were sent, and to them Jesus Christ and the apostles first announced the truth, but, with few exceptions, they refused it; and the Gentiles, who knew nothing of the Law or the prophets, came and took their place. Thus they who came last were first; and because at the end of the world the Hebrews also will be converted, thus the first shall be last. Nothing can be plainer.

The other sentence: *''Many are called, but few are chosen,''* is a little difficult. Some think, and with reason, that this is not connected with the parable, because it appears from the parable that not only were all called, but all were chosen, since the pay was given to all without exception. How, then, is this sentence to be understood? Many are called, that is, all are called, since all are many, and because this parable is applied in the sense of all.[1] All are called, but the chosen, that is, the privileged souls, the more perfect, who rise to greater heights of virtue and sanctity, are not many, but few.

My friends, be not disturbed at hearing the words: *''Few are chosen,''* as if they who are saved are few. We do not know the number of the elect, nor would it do us any good to know it; we only know that God wishes all men to be saved, and wishing them to be saved, He must give them the necessary grace. This He denies to none who

[1] Rom. v. 15.

on their part do what they can to save themselves, and if any one is lost he is lost solely because he wished to be lost; and this is enough for our peace and comfort.[1]

[1]On the number of the elect see the last Conference of Monsabré, 1889, recently published by me.

Sexagesima Sunday

HOMILY XXIII

BRETHREN: You gladly suffer the foolish: whereas you yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be lifted up, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonor, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man dare (I speak foolishly) I dare also: they are Hebrews, so am I: they are Israelites, so am I; they are the seed of Abraham, so am I; they are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise), I am more; in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren, in labor and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

who is blessed forever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus, the governor of the nation under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed) but I will come to the visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth) such an one rapt even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I can not tell: God knoweth) that he was caught up into paradise; and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. For such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. For though I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish, for I will say the truth; but I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me; and He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.—EPISTLE, 2 *Cor.* xi. 19-33; xii. 1-9.

¶ I COULD not forego reading the Epistle of the Mass of this Sunday in full, in order not to depart from the custom universally followed. More-

over, the passage is so vigorous and animated, so full of popular, nervous, and condensed eloquence, rivaling in this the best productions of the greatest orators, that I felt it my duty to let you hear and enjoy it in its native simplicity and rugged strength. One would think that in these two pages the great apostle wished to pour out the fervor of his whole soul.

You will understand that lack of time will not permit of my commenting one by one on these four-and-twenty verses, as we are in the habit of doing; but instead, I shall consider together all the Apostle says, and, taking two or three points which contain the gist and substance of his meaning, make them the subject of our meditation.

St. Paul had founded the Church of Corinth, composed mostly of Gentiles, but in part of Hebrews settled there. As appears from the Letters of the Apostle, this was a flourishing church; still it was not long before parties sprang up in it, and to suppress these St. Paul wrote his first Letter. Shortly afterward Titus went there and sent back cheering news to the Apostle, but he was also obliged to tell him that the dissensions at Corinth had not wholly ceased; that there were many there, chiefly converted Hebrews, who opposed the Apostle himself, proclaimed him an enemy of Moses and of their national institutions, and even went so far as to call in doubt his mission and his dignity as an apostle.

The scope of the Letter, and especially of that part of it which I have just read for you, is to prove by his works his dignity or office as an apostle, and to show that he had done not less, but

more, than others; and he goes on to recount what he has done, giving rapid sketches of his incredible labors, of the countless and nameless sufferings which he endured for Jesus Christ and for the salvation of souls. One would think that the Apostle wished to give a splendid panegyric of himself, of his undertakings, and glorious achievements.

In the first place, we learn from all this that the greatest saints, God permitting, are not exempt here below from contradictions and from the severest trials, and that to this law St. Paul was no exception.

This man of prodigious intellect and of a will of iron decided in an instant to give up Judaism, of which he had been a fanatical champion, and to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Called by Him to the apostolate, he faced every sort of enemies, Jews and Gentiles; he suffered exile and imprisonment; he was scourged and stoned. One can not conceive of a more laborious life than his; from Damascus he went to Antioch, Tarsus, and Jerusalem; he journeyed thence into Arabia; went back again to Jerusalem; next he set out on his travels in Asia Minor, Cyprus, Greece, and Macedonia, and went back once more to Jerusalem; he then visited the churches founded by him; and finally he was carried away in chains to Rome. It seems impossible to give a full account of the toils and labors of this extraordinary man. And, withal, this apostle and vessel of election did not escape the censures, the accusations, and the calumnies of the Christians, some of them, it may be, his own converts. He was suspected of being an enemy of Moses and of the Law and of being a false prophet,

and was forced in self-defense to set forth the proofs of his divine mission. What lessons should we draw from this? Many; and first of all, that the most virtuous and those most faithful to their duties must be prepared in view of the weaknesses, the ignorance, and the passions of men, frequently to have their best intentions challenged and misinterpreted; and they should not be surprised at being persecuted and at being made a target for slander and detraction. They must be content with the testimony of a good conscience before God and patiently wait until He does them justice, which He will sooner or later. Let them, strong in faith, keep before their eyes the luminous example of St. Paul, who had ferocious enemies even among the Christians themselves.

In the second place let us consider how St. Paul bore himself when accused and calumniated.

There are cases in which, when one is accused and calumniated, he may commit his cause to God; but there are also other cases in which the accused and calumniated not only may, but should, defend himself and unmask his adversaries and slanderers. When the one accused and calumniated holds an office or dignity, to the proper discharge of which the esteem of the public is necessary, and when this is lessened or destroyed by slander, and harm is done to others in consequence, he not only may, but should, lay bare the iniquitous arts of his enemies, vindicate his good name, and, if necessary, cite them before the courts of justice. Of this sort of vindication St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, in his Letters, and especially in this place, gives us a splendid example. In taking up

his defense, he had no thought of bringing confusion on his enemies and putting them to shame for the vulgar pleasure of humiliating them, or from a base motive of revenge; such thoughts could find no place in a mind so noble; his only motive was to preserve to his apostolate the honor and public confidence, so necessary if his works were to bear fruit; his only end was the holy one of doing good and saving souls; he did not give anything else a thought.

It is truly said that it is not becoming to praise oneself: *Laus in ore proprio sordescit.* Nothing is truer. The consciousness of our own infirmity, the reasonable doubt as to our being safe judges in our behalf, the most elementary modesty, common alike to all, even to the proud, forbid us to praise ourselves, since in doing so we should merit the scorn and excite the laughter of the public. But it may happen, in order to defend oneself, to prove one's innocence, and to do good to others, that it will be not only permissible, but a duty, to appeal to one's works, which in themselves are worthy of praise; and this may be done without the shadow of vanity or arrogance. Such was the case of St. Paul when he wrote his second Letter to the Corinthians. He did not hesitate to recount the story of his apostolate, which was the story of his miraculous conversion, of his prodigious revelations, of his sorrows, of the persecutions to which he was subjected, of his works, and of his tireless zeal. The Apostle narrates all this to the Corinthians, not as a boast, or to make a parade of his works and sufferings, but solely to check the boldness of those who pretended to be apostles of

Christ and to cast doubt upon his mission, thus leading astray many of the faithful. And so true is it that the Apostle did not speak of himself and of his deeds for the sake of gaining praise, that he twice protests that he does this reluctantly, and avows that in doing so he speaks like a fool or madman; but you, he says elsewhere, have driven me to it.

Hence it is not blameworthy, nor an evidence of vanity, to speak of oneself and of one's works which are praiseworthy, when to do so is necessary in order to defend oneself, to protect one's good name, and to do good to other souls.

St. Paul does not confine himself to a record of the deeds of his apostolate, to which all could bear witness; but coming to closer quarters with his adversaries he boldly appeals to other and stronger proofs of his apostolate, proofs known only to himself, but which the Corinthians could not refuse to accept on his word, since he said in reference to them: "*God knoweth that I lie not.*"

Here St. Paul speaks of being caught up to the third heaven, of having there seen and heard things which it is not given man to utter; he says that it is most certain that this happened above fourteen years before, and that, when he was caught up, he knew not whether he was in the body or in the spirit. This, according to St. Paul, is the supreme seal of his apostolate and the highest sanction for his authority.

After giving this greatest proof of his divine mission and this supreme reason why he should glory, St. Paul again speaks of his own nothingness, lest, as he says, any one should think him bet-

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ter than he is. He comes down to earth from the heights of heaven, and contrasts his own natural weakness and misery with the greatness of the gift he had received. He speaks of a sting of the flesh, of a minister of Satan that buffeted and tormented him, but he does not say what this sting was or who the minister. Some think that the goad that tortured him was his concupiscence; but it is hardly likely that St. Paul would speak of this human frailty, and much less that he would glory in such an infirmity, as he does immediately afterward. It is quite possible that he referred to some great trial, or to some acute sorrow that profoundly troubled him, which we can not know, but which must have been known to the Corinthians. It must have been a deep and bitter sorrow, since he tells us that he thrice, that is, often, besought the Lord that it might be taken from him; but that the answer came back, probably by an internal inspiration, that he must content himself with the grace which would enable him to bear up under it, because power or strength is made perfect and purified in infirmity. Then the Apostle cries out in a burst of faith, love, and humility: "*Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.*"

We too often, when suffering in body and mind, when subjected to the bitterest trials from enemies at home and abroad, and harassed with annoyances and fears of every sort, cry out to God to free us from them; and He seems deaf to our prayers; our trials and our griefs continue and it may be increase from day to day. And why? Because it is good for us to suffer; it makes us hum-

ble, makes us feel and know our nothingness, puts a holy fear into us, forces us to go to God, to cast ourselves upon Him; it detaches us from the things of earth and affords us an occasion of greater merit. In the midst, then, of the trials and the bitter struggles of this life, let us in fullest confidence and holy joy, cry out with St. Paul: "*Gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.*"

HOMILY XXIV

AT THAT time: When a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto Him, He spoke by a similitude: The sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside and was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock: and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground: and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred-fold. Saying these things, He cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And His disciples asked Him what this parable might be. To whom He said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside, are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be

saved. Now they upon the rock, are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots; for they believe for awhile, and in time of temptation, they fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and a very good heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience. —Gospel, *Luke* viii. 4-15.

This, my friends, is the Gospel which the Church appoints to be read in the Mass of this Sunday and which I am about to explain. Of the meaning of the parable which it contains, there can be no question, since at the request of the apostles Jesus Christ deigned to explain it to them. As you yourselves can see, the parable is in all its details most simple and instructive; it could not be more so.

"*When a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto Him, He spoke by a similitude.*" Jesus was in Galilee, on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias or Genesareth, and near the village of Capharnaum. Only a short time before He had commenced to preach. The fame of His miracles, the simplicity and sublimity of His teaching, the unction of His words which went straight to the heart, the whole appearance of His person, lighted up by a ray of the Divinity from within, touched the people, moved them, filled them with a holy enthusiasm, and they followed Him about wherever He went, hanging

spellbound upon the words that fell from His lips.

Those crowds, so hungry to hear the word of God, are a great example to us and teach us that we, too, should listen with love and respect to the word of God, when it is announced to us in our churches. The doctrine announced is ever the same, though it may be preached by many.

Jesus began thus: "*The sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell on a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground, and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred-fold. Saying these things, He cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" This parable was certainly not difficult to understand, and Jesus Christ, after narrating it, cried out: "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,*" as if to say, that one with the least intelligence, by meditating on it, can understand it. Still, I think I am correct in saying that many of those who heard it did not take in its meaning, since, as we shall soon learn, even the apostles confessed that they did not comprehend it.

What should these crowds have done? They should have done what the apostles did shortly afterward; ask for an explanation, which would doubtless have been given to them, as it was given to the apostles. But because of their indifference or pride, or for some other reason, they did not ask an explanation and so continued ignorant of

its meaning. My friends, let us not imitate them in this. When a difficulty comes into our mind which we can not solve, or when we are harassed by doubts which possibly are a menace to our faith, let us ask light of those who are able to give it, and the acquisition of a truth will be the reward of our humility. Where is the man who knows everything? Or who at times does not need light? Or who will disdain to ask aid when he needs it? It should not cause any surprise that even learned persons in high places at times require to be instructed in certain truths of faith which they do not know, or concerning which they are imperfectly informed. Even those very proficient in the human sciences, have, as is often the case, only an imperfect knowledge of the science of religion and need to be more fully instructed. Let us, then, not be ashamed to ask information from those who are competent to give it. But how rarely do we ask it!

The apostles, finding themselves alone with Jesus, as St. Mark relates, asked Him the meaning of the parable. See the humility and filial confidence of the disciples. Not having understood the sense of the parable, they were not ashamed to avow their ignorance and to ask their divine Master to enlighten them; and He replied with the love of a father: "*To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God,*" that is, "I shall explain to you the hidden things of My doctrine, or the sense of the parable." "*To others I speak in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.*"

But, O Lord, how is this? Art Thou not the

Teacher by excellence; art Thou not come to instruct the poor, and Thou speakest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand? Wilt Thou, then, that they continue in dense ignorance and that Thy coming and Thy word shall be useless to them? Why dost Thou preach, if Thou wilt not that they understand? Of course you will perceive at once that it would be horrible blasphemy to say that Jesus Christ preached or spoke in parables in order not to be understood. On the contrary, He spoke in parables in order to accommodate Himself to their weakness. If He had spoken the truth more clearly, they would have understood Him so much the less. He hid it under the veil of parables to temper its light, so that it might not startle or repel them, drive them away and thus increase their guilt. He spoke in parables that they who caught His meaning might derive from it food which would give them life; that they who did not understand might ask an explanation, which would have been given to them; and that they who did not ask an explanation might neither incur a greater guilt nor run the risk of trampling pearls under foot.

After speaking thus to His apostles Jesus went on to explain the parable. Let us give heed to His words. "*The seed is the word of God,*" that is, it represents the word of God. Let us see how the seed is a figure of the word of God. Seed is cast into the earth, and, remaining there, is warmed by the sun and moistened by the rain; it takes root, assimilates the needful substances of the earth, grows, bursts into flower, and then produces fruit,

which is always in proportion to the richness of the soil in which it is sown, to the warmth of the sun, to the moisture of the rain, and to the toil the cultivator spends upon it.

The truth of God, or His word, wrapped up in a parable, is like a seed within its hull. The truth entering by the ear, goes to the heart, which welcomes it, loves it and makes it its own. What happens then? Through the agency of divine grace, which acts like light, warmth, and fertilizing moisture, a mysterious espousal takes place between truth and the soul. The soul thinks, wills, and operates under the influence of the truth that has entered into it; or better still, the truth takes root in the soul, grows, is covered with flowers and fruit; the flowers and the fruit are thoughts, good desires, and good works. A single seed produces twenty, fifty, a hundred-fold; how many good thoughts, holy affections, and meritorious works is not a single truth, put to account by man, capable of inspiring!

The multiplication of the seed is effected by the seed itself, by the earth, by sun and water, and by the labor and industry of the cultivator; good and holy works are the result of truth and human liberty, divine grace, and man's co-operation. Without seed or truth there can be no fruit; and without the co-operation of man the seed will remain sterile and unproductive. Rightly, then, did Jesus Christ represent the word of God, or truth, under the figure of the seed and the human heart under the figure of the soil.

Jesus continues: "*They by the wayside are they that hear. then the devil cometh and taketh the*

word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved.'' The seed was sown and some fell by the wayside, or on the footway along the edge of the field, and was trampled on or devoured by the fowls of the air. This is a picture of those men who hear the word of God, accept the truth, but in whose souls it does not take root. How many come into church, listen to the word of God, know the truth, and going forth from thence think no more of it. Theirs is the seed that is trodden under foot, devoured by the birds of the air and by the devil. Our chief care, then, should be to take the word of God into our hearts and with it the truth, to impress it deeply upon them, so that the enemy may not steal it away, and that our hearts may not become as a public highway on which not a blade of grass is to be seen.

''Now they upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots, for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away.'' The seed falling among rocks, or on stony soil, with little or no moisture, is warmed by the sun, strikes root, shoots up through the soil, and begins to unfold its leaves; but suddenly it is dried up by the sun, and, unable to fix its roots in the soil whence it must draw its sustenance, it grows sickly, fades away, and dies without giving even the faintest indication of fruit.

Here are represented those souls who listen to the word of God, receive it gladly, but languidly and without firmness of purpose. The word of God, or the truth, can not take deep root in them; it lies on the surface, destitute of moisture, and

before it can bring forth fruit the poor plant withers away and dies. It is absolutely necessary, my friends, for the truths of faith to sink deep into our heart and through our will, which must love them, welcome them, and make them its own, to become firmly rooted there. Then the winds of temptation may blow and the enemy may make war upon us, but we shall bear bravely up, strong against every trial.

"*And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit.*"

You will have noticed how the parable goes on step by step, each new statement being stronger than the preceding; the first seed was cast along the wayside and never came up; the second was sown on stony soil, and came up, but soon withered away and died; the third fell on good soil and was choked by thorns. You may have frequently seen good seed sown in rich soil, but scarcely had it sprung up and developed a vigorous growth, when thistles and briars, thorns and other noxious weeds come up beside it, overgrow it and choke it, unless they are promptly rooted out by the husbandman. Divine truths are sown in our souls by the instruction we receive; they have a vigorous growth and give promise of abundant fruit; but the distraction of the things of this world, the lust of wealth, the thirst for pleasure, the fever of ambition, ill-regulated self-love, and, in a word, our disorderly and rebellious passions, cause us to lose sight of these truths; we take no further heed of them, and they lie in our hearts as if they were not

there. As weeds and briars rob good seed of the sap of life and finally kill it outright, so the passions, the cares of this world, and sensual pleasures rob the soul of its vital strength, make sterile the heavenly seed of truth, and finally kill it.

What is to be done? We must do what the cultivator of the soil does, who cuts down the weeds and roots them out mercilessly; we must cut away, and, if possible, root out our growing passions, especially the passions of avarice, gluttony, and impurity.

"The seed on the good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience."

St. Matthew[1] and St. Mark[2] give this part of the parable more at length, saying that the seed that fell on good ground brought forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred-fold, whereas St. Luke simply says that it brought forth fruit after patient toil.

Note the words of the Evangelist, because each has its meaning. Jesus Christ speaks of those who listen to the word of God and welcome His truth. They are, He says, like good ground upon which seed has been sown.

Who are these? They are those who have a good and perfect heart. Do you understand this, my friends? They have a good and perfect heart, who go to hear the word of God because they love truth and desire to embrace it; they treasure it up and translate it into deeds; they are not influenced by a mere worldly curiosity; they do not

[1] xiii. 3 seq.
[2] iv. 3 seq.

criticize the preacher for lack of literary style; they look less to form and more to substance; they listen with docility, as the apostles listened to Jesus Christ, and they seek only to please Him and do His will. These bring forth fruit, provided, and I call your attention to the last condition, provided they be patient, "*in patience.*"

To put in practice the truths we know, especially in certain cases, is not an easy thing. It demands strength of purpose, an unfailing constancy and fortitude, and a spirit of sacrifice equal to any emergency. Not to fail amid so many trials incident to the life of a Christian, it is hardly necessary to say, requires patience, that patience, which as St. Paul says, they have who inherit the promises.

Quinquagesima Sunday

HOMILY XXV

BRETHREN: If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain, faith, hope, charity: these three, but the greater of these is charity.—EPISTLE, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1-13.

THE passage I have just read for you is the entire thirteenth chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. In listening to these words you will have observed that they contain a treasure of practical wisdom, and the passage is a masterpiece of heavenly doctrine. I regret that lack of time will prevent me from fully developing this sublime page of the Apostle; I can only give its drift; still, you will supply by your attention what is lacking in my necessarily brief comments, and you will find a deeper meaning than my hasty words will express.

In the early ages of the Church extraordinary gifts were very common among the faithful; there were gifts of prophecy, gifts of tongues, gifts of interior knowledge of spirits, and gifts of miraculous healing. God was then lavish of His gifts, because they were necessary for the spread of the Faith. As time went on and the Faith was established, this need grew less, and the manifestation of extraordinary gifts was less frequent. Among the faithful of the Church of Corinth these gifts were quite common, and St. Paul frequently speaks of them. After laying down wise rules for their use, he goes on to show that there are other gifts more excellent and more desirable than those upon which the Corinthians set so much store, since extraordinary gifts, even the greatest of them, are nothing unless associated with charity, the queen and the root of all other virtues. And here begins the teaching of the Apostle on this point. Let us listen to it.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as

sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. If I should have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Here the Apostle wishes to show that charity, or the love of God, and by consequence, the love of our neighbor, is the greatest of the virtues, and that without it all else is useless.

I need hardly remark that the charity of which the Apostle speaks is lodged in the heart and manifests itself outwardly in good works. It is a great privilege, St. Paul says, to speak with the tongues of men; and a greater still to speak with the tongues of angels,[1] to possess the gift of prophecy, and to be able to search all the mysteries of earth and heaven; but greater than all would be the gift of a faith so strong as to move mountains from place to place. Who could help admiring a man so gifted? Who would not do homage to such a living miracle? And yet St. Paul says that such a one, if he has not charity, is but sounding brass, or less still, he is simply nothing.

The Apostle does not stop at this; he presses the argument still further, saying: "*And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and*

[1]What the language of the angels may be is a mystery to us. Assuredly they communicate their thoughts to one another; but as they have no bodies it is difficult to conceive how they do so. Consult St. Thomas, who treats of this subject. As we often read another's thoughts from his gestures, from the expression of his countenance, and from the look of his eye, though he does not utter a word, so, I fancy, do the angels converse with one another. Their thought is as a smile that radiates from their substance

have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." This seems an exaggeration, and yet it is only the naked truth. How so? you will ask. How can a man give all he has to the poor, give even his own life, and deliver his body to be burned, and still not have charity, and therefore be lost everlastingly? Does not Jesus Christ Himself say in the Gospel that greater love no man has than to lay down his life for another? To give one's life for another is the superlative of charity. How, then, can the Apostle imagine that one would die for another and still not have charity, and that the sacrifice of his life would profit him nothing? How can this be? Yes, even when one does all this, not from love of God or to obey Him, but from ambition or pride, from caprice or ostentation, or from like motives, he would, instead of meriting a reward, commit sin and deserve chastisement. History furnishes examples of men who acted from such motives. Even the greatest sacrifices, such as the sacrifice of possessions and of life, receive their value from the end or the motive for which they are done; if they are not done for God and not inspired by the charity that binds us to Him, they are worthless.

Here St. Paul is not speaking of a fact, but giving a hypothetical case, as if he would say: "Granted that a man distribute all his goods to the poor, so that he himself would be reduced to extremest misery, and that he sacrifice his own life in their behalf, a thing humanly speaking impossible, unless inspired by charity, still all would be done to no purpose." You will now, my friends, understand the worth of charity; with it

all things are aids, and without it nothing avails to gain heaven.

Here St. Paul makes one of those sudden transitions, so frequent in his Letters, and sets himself to give with a master's hand the qualities of Christian charity. Let us examine them one by one and we shall profit by doing so.

"*Charity is patient.*" When one's heart is filled with charity he is not only patient, and therefore strong and great of soul, but he is forbearing and so even-tempered that sorrows and sufferings, though long and acute, do not disturb him; he is ever the same.

"*Charity is kind.*" "A patient charity," says St. Bernard, "is sufficient; but a charity that is kind fills the measure to overflowing, because while a patient charity loves those from whom it suffers, a charity that is kind loves them ardently."[1] Charity is ever engaged in doing kindnesses; in this it never fails; and its words are words of peace and love.

"*Charity envieth not.*" Whosoever loves his neighbor from love of God, loves him as he loves himself; he makes no distinction between thine and mine; he rejoices at the good fortune of another as he would at his own, and he has no idea of such a thing as envy.

"*Charity dealeth not perversely.*" Charity gives a nice sense of delicacy; it is ever careful not to offend or displease any one in word or act, or in any other way; since to give displeasure to an-

[1]Charitas patiens est, sufficit; charitas benigna est, cumulus est; quia benigna charitas etiam quos tolerat, amat et amat ardenter.

other would be to give pain to the charitable; the charitable, therefore, never go beyond the proper bounds in anything, and are ever tranquil and modest.

"*Charity is not puffed up.*" Vanity, pride, and arrogance are the fruit of the evil tree of ill-regulated self-love; once this self-love is subdued and reduced to obedience, charity reigns, and is always humble, meek, and gracious to all.

"*Charity is not ambitious.*" Charity contains and gives life to all other virtues; it is the mother of order and harmony in everything, and hence it gently removes all harshness, rudeness, and everything that is or seems to be unbecoming. As St. John Chrysostom beautifully says, it covers with wings of gold whatever it encloses in its embrace.[1]

"*Charity seeketh not its own.*" Wherever we look we see men intent on getting their own, and in seeking for themselves. For themselves they seek wealth and honors, pleasures and all else; their *Ego* is the center to which all their thoughts, desires, and efforts converge. Charity changes all this; in doing for others it forgets itself, and like to God, who gives to all and gives lavishly and always, it loves to give rather than to receive.

"*Charity is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil.*" When one loves another he does all he can to protect him from harm and strives in every way to benefit him; and to do this it is sometimes necessary to be firm and determined and to employ means that are disagreeable and painful. A physician, in order to cure a patient, may have to cut and burn; a father, to correct a wayward son,

[1] Alis aureis omnium quos complectitur vitia tegit.

reproves and punishes him. Should we call this a charity that is provoked to anger? By no means. Charity, even when it is necessary to chastise, or to wound, or to flog, finds innumerable ways of showing that, in being seemingly harsh, it is prompted by motives of love. The look, the tone of voice, the gestures, the general bearing of the person inflicting pain, all bear witness that everything is inspired by love; and the deeper and more ardent the love, the more he suffers who, though reluctantly, makes others suffer, verifying the words of the poet:

Nè per sferza è pero madra men pia[1].

Charity never belies the truth, and if one does what is clearly wrong, it will not say, nor will it think, that he does what is right; by no means. If a brother does wrong and it is possible to believe that he acted inadvertently, or in good faith, or from a good motive, or involuntarily, it will be only too glad to believe so and to say so, because charity thinks no evil, unless compelled by truth to do so, and then always reluctantly.

"*Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth.*" These are blessed words. The soul is made for virtue, for justice, and for truth, as the eye is made for light and the ear for harmony; and hence it is glad and rejoices when an act is conformable to virtue, justice, and truth. This is its sweetest music, its purest joy. My friends, always love truth and justice; flee and abhor lying and injustice wherever they show themselves.

[1]A mother is not less loving because she flogs

"Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." A charitable man bears all things; that is, as long as he can, he seemingly does not notice the defects of others, and he charitably hides their faults; he is always disposed to believe others because he thinks all men good, he hopes for the best in all; he lovingly endures all without complaining; and he endures because he hopes. It is scarcely necessary to observe that in believing all things and hoping all things we must act according to reason and truth, for where reason and truth forbid us to believe and to hope it would be weakness and stupidity to do either, since there is no virtue where there is no truth. Even Sacred Scripture teaches us that to believe at once without sufficient motive is foolish. Bear well in mind, my friends, that religion never asks us to act contrary to reason, because reason as well as religion is a gift of God; and should we believe everything that is said without satisfying ourselves of its truth, we should very justly be despised and sin against religion itself.

The Apostle goes on enumerating the other excellencies of charity, as contrasted with the gifts of prophecy, of tongues, and of knowledge, saying: *"Charity never falleth away, whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed."* All these gifts, excellent in themselves, shall end with the present life; they are means by which we are led on to God, and shall cease with death, but charity will never cease. The love of God and of His living images on earth, will, when we enter into heaven, be puri-

fied, and immeasurably augmented, and will endure through all ages.

Now "*we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.*" What is our knowledge here on earth? A spark, a faint spark, as compared with the sun. Our knowledge here on earth, no matter how great and penetrating, is ever limited to a few things, is mixed with doubt and error, and is always changeable; and even prophecy, which is partly an infused knowledge, reveals only certain facts of the future. When we go to heaven all these imperfections and limitations will disappear, and instead of an uncertain and limited knowledge, and of prophecy, we shall know all things fully and perfectly, because we shall see all things, revealed in God.

Here St. Paul illuminates his argument with a beautiful and very simple image. "*When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away the things of a child.*" This we have all experienced. The way of thinking and acting and reasoning changes with age. What were our thoughts, our conversations, our judgments when we were six, seven, ten, twelve years of age? You all know. We grow up, we reach our fifteenth, twentieth, thirtieth year, and, without being conscious of it, we have changed our habits of mind into other and better ones, more worthy of grown-up men; we have passed from the imperfect to the relatively perfect, from what was childlike to what is manly; and thus, says St. Paul, but in

a more excellent way, shall we be changed in passing from earth to heaven.

Sometimes we are taxed with having changed, as if to change were in itself blameworthy. We must distinguish. To change the true into the false, or good into evil, is certainly highly blameworthy; but to change the false into the true, evil into good, the imperfect into the perfect, good into better, and better into best, is not blameworthy. Who will say it is? Every addition to my knowledge works a change in my soul, and in this sense we all change, and it would be stupid to complain of it, or wonder at it.

"*We now see through a glass in a dark manner.*" In the present order we see things by reflection, as in a cloud, or as an image in a mirror, but in heaven we shall "*see them face to face,*" that is directly, without any intermedium, as they are in themselves. "*Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known,*" not indeed with the infinitely perfect knowledge with which God knows me; this would be impossible, but directly, through no created medium, and in Him and through Him I shall know everything it is possible for me to know.

"*And now,*" concludes the Apostle, "*there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greater of these is charity*"—the greater for the reasons already given.

My friends, God is charity, as St. John teaches. We are children of God, children of charity. Let us ever prove ourselves such in word and deed, because this is the fulfilling of the law.

HOMILY XXVI

AT THAT time: Jesus took unto Him the twelve, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man; for He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged Him they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass when He drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing commanded him to be brought unto Him. And when he was come near, He asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed Him, glorifying God, and all the people when they saw it, gave praise to God.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xviii. 31-43.

MY FRIENDS, this is the Gospel of the day, the Gospel which the Church directs to be read on this Sunday, known as Quinquagesima. It is

divided into two distinct parts: the first contains the clear and explicit announcement made by Jesus Christ concerning His coming, passion, death, and resurrection; the second gives an account of the miracle wrought near Jericho on the blind man by the wayside. These things happened during the last journey of Jesus Christ from Galilee to Jerusalem, shortly before His triumphal entrance into that city. And now for the explanation.

"Jesus took unto Him the twelve and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man."

Jesus had seventy-two disciples and twelve apostles, and toward the end of His life they usually accompanied Him wherever He went. As we learn from the Gospels, the twelve apostles enjoyed His special confidence, and three of them had a still closer intimacy with Him. As Jesus was going on from Galilee to Jerusalem, making that journey for the last time, and having His apostles with Him, He said plainly to them that the predictions of the prophets concerning Him were about to be fulfilled, and speaking more in detail of those predictions, He said: *"The Son of man, He who speaks to you, shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again."*

This, my friends, is of all prophecies the most splendid and the most luminous. What is required for a prophecy, in the strict sense of the

word, in proof of a divine truth? First, it is required that some future event shall be foretold in clear and explicit terms. Next, that it shall be utterly impossible for human reason to foresee this future event. And third, that the event foretold shall take place at the time, in the place, and in the way indicated in the prophecy. Now do the words of Jesus Christ contain a prophecy having all these characteristics? Undoubtedly. Jesus Christ foretells His approaching death and gives the accompanying circumstances in detail. It was to take place shortly, and in Jerusalem; it was to be brought about by Hebrews and Gentiles; but first He was to be mocked, scourged, and spit upon. Nay more, He clearly foretold His resurrection, specifying the very day. Now could He by human foresight alone have foretold all this? No; for everything depended upon the will of others, upon their free will, which might or might not act as He had foretold; and at the time no one knew or possibly even dreamed of such a thing. There is not the suggestion of uncertainty or ambiguity in the words in which Jesus Christ foretells all this; they could not be clearer or more explicit. Twelve persons heard the prophecy, they were eye-witnesses, and they related it, and so great was their certainty as to its fulfilment, that they subsequently died for Him who uttered it. And did His passion, His death, and His resurrection, so complex in their circumstances and so determinate, take place as He had foretold? The whole world bears witness that they did. We have, then, in the words of Jesus a magnificent prophecy, literally fulfilled, and therefore a most luminous

proof of His divinity, since only God could foreknow this complicated series of events.

But, you will say, this prophecy proves indeed that Jesus Christ may have been or was a great prophet, but not that He was God. It is not difficult to answer this objection. There were many, very many prophets, but not one of them ever said: *"I am the Son of God."* Jesus Christ alone, not once but repeatedly, made this declaration. Moreover, the prophecies which were made and perfectly fulfilled prove His divinity, unless we wish to affirm that God intervened with a miracle to prove a lie and a blasphemy; for, if not true, it would be a horrid lie and blasphemy for Jesus to say: *I am God.*

Why did Jesus wish to make this prophecy to His apostles? Evidently to prepare them for a terrible trial, or at least to lessen the scandal which, being weak, they would take on seeing Him die so ignominious a death, and also to furnish them a peremptory proof of His divine mission. St. John Chrysostom says, speaking in the person of Jesus: "You see that I go to death willingly. When you see Me nailed to the cross bear in mind that you are not to regard Me simply as a man; for while man may be able to face death, he does not do so willingly." Moreover, this prophecy was an act of goodness and mercy toward His apostles; it was intended to soften the bitter pain which they would experience on seeing their divine Master tortured and cruelly put to death.

And why did Jesus Christ say all this to His apostles, and not to the disciples and the crowds that followed Him? He had said the same on

other occasions, although less clearly; and in saying it to His twelve apostles He was making it known to the others also; and, then, He may have wished to give the apostles a special token of His love.

What did the apostles say and do on hearing these words of Jesus Christ? If we did not read it in the Gospel we could not believe it. "*And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said.*" What is the meaning of this? Did not the apostles understand the literal sense of the words or know what it meant to be given into the hands of the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, to die and to rise again? Certainly they did; they understood only too well the obvious sense of the words, but they could not comprehend, nor could they persuade themselves, that all this would be fulfilled in the person of their divine Master. They loved Him, they worshiped Him; they looked to Him to restore the temporal kingdom of Israel; they awaited His complete triumph in the Hebrew or material sense; how, then, could they comprehend such humiliations, or the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? They did not refuse to give credence to His words, they believed Him; but they could not harmonize facts which seemed to them to clash with one another; they were confused, dismayed, afflicted; they listened and were silent. Only when the prophecy would be verified by events could their difficulties be solved and their minds enlightened. And such was the case.

In the meantime, let us admire the surprising honesty and frankness of the Evangelists who did not hesitate to record this astonishing ignorance of the apostles and make it known to the whole world; and let us also learn from them to love sincerity, though it may be at great cost, and, when the occasion demands, to avow without blushing our faults and mistakes.

The ignorance of the apostles is a great lesson for us all. Though formed in the school of Jesus Christ they did not yet understand the substance of His teaching, which consists almost wholly in the science of the cross. What wonder that many Christians in our day show a repugnance to the teaching and the practice of the cross, which is the very life of the Gospel? We should, then, be very indulgent toward so many ignorant Christians, when we call to mind the ignorance of the apostles, who were instructed by Jesus Christ Himself.

St. Luke passes on to the narrative of the miracle wrought upon the blind man, near Jericho.[1] "*Now it came to pass, when He drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging.*" The Evangelist does not give his name; but he was likely the son of Timeus, mentioned by St. Luke. As the blind and poor were accustomed to do, he sat by the wayside asking alms of the passers-by.

[1]St. Matthew (xx. 30) and St. Mark (x. 46) speak of two blind men, whose sight was restored by Jesus, while St. Luke here speaks only of one. It seems certain that Jesus healed one when entering Jericho and the other when leaving it; Matthew and Mark put both of these together, whereas St. Luke speaks only of the first.

The poor blind man heard the unusual clatter of those who preceded and followed Jesus Christ, and listening he became aware that something extraordinary was taking place. Impelled by natural curiosity he asked those near him what it all meant. They told him that "*Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.*" Hearing the name, which he had often heard before as that of a great prophet, a wonder-worker, and the expected Messias, a flash of hope entered his mind and the certainty that he would regain his sight. Rising up and gesticulating and pushing on as best he could toward Jesus, he cried out with all his might: "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" A simple prayer and a sublime one, which faith, and the hope of being cured, put into the mouth of this poor man, who recognized in Jesus the Son of David and the expected Saviour of the world. He cried out so loudly and insistently that those near him warned him to be silent, fearing lest he might annoy those about him and disturb Jesus; but the more they tried to silence him the louder he cried out: "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" This poor blind man, my friends, who kept on repeating the same beautiful and eloquent prayer, is a pattern to us, teaching us how we should pray to God. We must pray, as he did, with living faith and perseveringly, utterly ignoring what others think or say of us.

Jesus hearing those pitiful cries, possibly requested by those near Him to do so, halted, as did those who accompanied Him. The blind man groping his way, and led by some who took pity on him, agitated and out of breath, threw himself at the

feet of Jesus, still crying out: *"Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me."* Jesus seeing him before Him, said with love in His voice: *"What wilt thou that I do to thee?"* Christ very well knew, as all knew, that the poor man was blind. He read his heart and knew what he would ask, but He wished that the miserable man should himself make the request, either that the miracle might be the better attested, or that by his request he might in a way merit his cure. As soon as the blind man heard the question of Jesus he replied with all the ardor of his soul and with a countenance beaming with hope in these words: *"Lord, that I may see."* What simplicity, faith, and energy in these words, *"Lord, that I may see"!* The moment was one to awaken feelings of awe and veneration; the people crowded about Jesus and the blind man; those at a distance struggled to get nearer, rising on tiptoe to get a better view; the silence was absolute and a thousand eyes were fixed on Jesus and the blind man, who with his face upturned breathlessly awaited the potent word, the word that would work a miracle. And Jesus said to him: *"Receive thy sight."* That word, like a lightning flash, opened the blind man's eyes; they were flooded with light, and he, beside himself with joy, uttered a cry of gratitude and love, to which were joined the shouts and the applause of the crowd, all glorifying God.

This miracle was wrought on the public highway, in the presence and under the eyes of a very great multitude, and with the single word, *"See."* It is narrated by eye-witnesses, who so believed in Jesus that they died for Him. Who can doubt the

divine power of Him who wrought it? Jesus Christ ascribed the miracle to the faith of the blind man: "*Thy faith hath made thee whole,*" that is, has healed thee; and in a sense this is true, for if the blind man had not had faith in Jesus, he would not have asked the miracle and Jesus would not have wrought it.

My friends, if many are not corporally blind, very many are mentally blind; those of our brothers are blind who have lost the Faith, or who doubt of it; they too are blind who, possessing the Faith, live not according to its teachings; they also are blind who, unmindful of the true goods of heaven, go in pursuit of the fleeting things of earth, the slaves of pride and vanity, of gluttony and impurity, and of the baser passions of their lower nature.

May all these rise up in their strength and go to Jesus, each crying out to Him, as did the blind man of Jericho: "*Lord, that I may see,* give me mental sight, the light of faith;" and Jesus will not send them away unheard or disconsolate; He will say to each of them: "*Receive thy sight, thy faith had made thee whole. Thy faith hath saved thee.*"

APPENDIX

Brief Hints on Sacred Hermeneutics

I

On the Senses of Sacred Scripture

THE *sense* of Sacred Scripture is said to be that conception, that truth, which the Holy Ghost, by means of Scriptural words, intends either immediately or mediately to express.

I say the *Holy Ghost,* He being the *primary author* of Scripture. I say *immediately* or *mediately,* since the Holy Ghost in Sacred Scripture teaches us in both ways: first, by means of the words themselves, through what they directly signify; and next, by means of the persons and things which are expressed by the words, and which, in the intention of the Holy Ghost, are figures of other persons and other things. If the truth intended by the Holy Ghost is expressed in the first way, the *sense* is said to be *literal;* if in the second way, the *sense* is said to be *typical* or *spiritual* or *mystical.*[1]

We shall speak briefly of both, following two very safe guides, namely *Xavier Patrizi* (Instit. de Interpret. Bibl. iterum edita Romæ, 1876)

[1]The two well-known verses, so familiar to the old Scholastics, need not be a source of confusion:

> *Litera* gesta docet; quid credas *allegoria*
> *Moralis* quid agas; quo tendas *anagogia,*

as if four different senses must be admitted in Scripture, for interpreters and theologians are generally agreed that the last three members denote only species of the *typical* sense. It is to be noted, however, that the first member of the lines quoted unduly restricts the matter of the literal sense by confining it solely to the narrative of facts.

and *Rudolf Cornely* (Histor. et Crit. Introd. in utr. Test. libros sacros, Vol. I. Parisiis, 1885).

The Literal Sense.—The *literal sense* of Scripture is that which the Scriptural words, according to the intention of the Holy Ghost, *immediately* express. And since the words of Sacred Scripture must be sometimes taken in their *proper* and sometimes in their *metaphorical* signification, there will therefore be a twofold *literal sense,* the *proper* and the *metaphorical.* Thus in the phrases: "*God created heaven and earth*" (*Gen.* i. 1), "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*" (*Matt.* v. 7), "*Love your enemies . . . . Do good to them that hate you*" (*Matt.* v. 44), "*I and the Father are one*" (*John* x. 30), "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism*" (*Eph.* iv. 5), this is the *proper* literal sense; whereas in the phrases: "*The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears unto their prayers*" (*Ps.* xxxiii. 16), "*You are the salt of the earth*" (*Matt.* v. 14), "*In the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth*" (*Philipp.* ii. 10), "*Christ is sitting at the right hand of God*" (*Col. iii.* 1), this is the *metaphorical* literal sense.

It is to be noted that there is a *metaphorical* literal sense, not only when there is a *metaphor* properly so called, but also in all figures and tropes of a discourse, as, for example, in an allegory,[1] a *parable,* an *apologue,* a *synecdoche,* and

[1]Here *allegory* is used in the sense of a *continued metaphor.* There are examples of it in St. Matthew (v. 13): "*You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt lose its savor wherewith shall it be salted?*" etc.; and in St. Paul (*Eph.* ii. 20): "*Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.*"

so on, and hence the sense is more commonly called generically the *figurative,* or *tropical,* or *translated sense.*

As the subject-matter which may be, and in matter of fact is, expressed by the *literal sense,* whether *proper* or *metaphorical,* is manifold, so some subdivide this into the *historical,* the *prophetical,* the *allegorical* or *dogmatical,* the *tropological* or *moral,* and the *anagogical,* according as the subjects enunciated are facts, or prophecies, or truths to be believed, or precepts to be practised, or future blessings for which we hope. It is clear to every one that, as Father Cornely observes, this division is of no possible use except to enable us more accurately to understand some expressions of certain interpreters, who frequently use these terms; and moreover the words *allegorical, tropological,* and *anagogical* are commonly used to denote the various species of the *typical sense,* as has already been said in a Note and as will become clearer further along.

The Typical Sense.—Every one knows that by an admirable disposition of Divine Providence many persons and things in Sacred Scripture are so set forth as to signify other persons and things. The *typical sense,* then, is that which, according to the intention of the Holy Ghost, is conveyed to us by the words of Scripture, not *immediately,* but *mediately,* that is, through those persons and things that are immediately expressed by the words. It supposes, however, as is clear, the *literal sense* and is based upon it. Thus, for example, by the words: "*Neither shall you break a bone thereof*" (*Ex.* xii. 46), the Holy Ghost wished to

signify here how Jesus Christ would be treated on the cross, while *literally* these words refer to the paschal lamb of the Hebrews, which was a figure of Jesus Christ. The persons or things intended by God to prefigure other persons or things, though designated in Scripture by various names, are, however, more commonly called *figures* or *types,* while the persons or things prefigured are generally known as *antitypes.* Hence the name *typical* is applied to that sense in Scripture which is also called *spiritual,* because it is, as it were, the soul, or the spirit of the letter; or *mystical,* because, not being immediately conveyed by the words, it lies, so to say, hidden under them.

Interpreters ordinarily distinguish three kinds of *types,* and therefore a triple *typical sense,* namely: the *prophetical,* the *anagogical,* and the *tropological* types. The *prophetical* or *allegorical* types are those that prefigure, or signify in advance, Christ, or His Church, or something relating to either, as, for example, Adam (*Rom.* v. 14), Melchisedech (*Heb.* vii. 3), the ark of Noah (1 *Peter* iii. 20, 21), the paschal lamb (*John* xix. 36), the return of the people of Israel from Egypt (*Matt.* ii. 15), the cloud that protected the Hebrews and the crossing of the Red Sea (1 *Cor.* x. 1 et seq.), the solemnities and the feasts of the Hebrew people (*Col.* ii. 16, 17), and so on. The *anagogical* types are those that are intended to signify heavenly goods, as, for example, the city of Jerusalem (*Gal.* iv. 25, 26, *Apoc.* xxi. 2), the Holy of Holies (*Heb.* ix. 23, 24). Finally, the *tropological* types are those intended to teach morals and furnish rules of conduct; thus, for example, the manna

that was to be gathered by the Hebrews before sunrise signified that men should praise the Lord at the beginning of the day (*Wis.* xvi. 27).[1]

There can be no possible doubt that in the Books of the Old Testament a *typical sense* must be admitted, this being proven, not only by the testimony of the Fathers, but also by the authority of the inspired writers of the New Testament, who, as may be seen from passages already quoted, frequently interpret the Books of the Old Testament in a *typical sense.*

The so-called *figurists,* who affirm that *everything* in the Old Testament is a *type* and find in every sentence of it a *typical sense,* greatly exaggerate and lay themselves open to ridicule. It is true the Old Testament, taken as a whole, is a type of the New, but this is very different from the assertion of the *figurists,* which rests on no solid argument. Nor do the words of St. Paul: "*All things happen to them in figures*" (1 *Cor.* x. 11) avail for their purpose, since he was not speaking of everything in the Old Testament, but only of those that he had previously mentioned, as is

[1]A *type* should not be confounded with a symbol. A symbolic fact does not go beyond the *metaphorical literal sense,* and it has no other sense (see *Jer.* i. 2 et seq., xxiv. 1 et seq.; *Ezech.* xii. 2 et seq., xxxvii. 1 et seq., etc.). A *typical* fact on the contrary (for example, the return of the Hebrew people from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, etc.) adds a *figurative* to the *literal* sense. On this difference *St. Augustine* (Serm. 89, n. 5, 6) may be consulted.

So also neither is the *type* to be confounded with the *exemplar.* The *type,* as, for example, Melchisedech, the paschal lamb, and Jerusalem, is in dignity inferior to the *antitype,* whereas the *exemplar* is nobler and more perfect than the *exemplato,* or that which is modeled on it; thus the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ is an *exemplar,* but not a *type* of ours; and so also we say that Jesus Christ in His actions has left us, not properly *types,* but rather *examples,* to imitate.

clear from the entire sentence: *All these things happen to them in figures.*

As to the New Testament, it is certain that no *Messianic types* are to be found in it, for as St. Augustine says, "*Veniente imperatore, imagines tolluntur de medio. Ibi spectatur imago ubi imperator præsens non est; ubi est autem ille cujus est imago, imago removetur. Imagines ergo præferebantur, antequam veniret imperator noster Dominus Jesus Christus. Imaginibus sublatis, fulget præsentia imperatoris.*" (Serm. 74, n. 5.)

But there may be other kinds of *types.* Thus, according to the Fathers, the boat of Peter, beaten by the waves, is a *type* of the Church when enduring persecution, and the prodigious catch of fish is a *type* of the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Jesus Christ.

Theologians ask if from a *typical sense* an argument may be drawn that will be valid for a demonstration. Without doubt the answer should be *affirmative,* when the *typical sense* has as a guarantee of its *certainty* the authority either of Scripture or of the infallible teaching of the Church; for since the *typical sense* is a Scriptural sense, a sense, that is, intended by the Holy Ghost, when there is no doubt as to its certainty, it is as valid for a demonstration as the *literal sense.* And as a matter of fact, St. Paul makes use of it in his reasoning. Thus to prove the divine Sonship of Christ he quotes (*Heb.* i. 5) the words of the Second Book of Kings (vii. 14): "*And I will be to Him a father, and He shall be to Me a son,*" which words are spoken of Solomon.

When there is no question of a strict demonstra-

tion, orators may make a more liberal use of the *typical sense,* but they should be on their guard lest they expose Holy Writ to the derision and scorn of the wicked and of the unbelieving, which not unfrequently happens. To avoid this I shall give two cautions which I translate from the work of the distinguished Father Cornely. (*a*) There should exist a real fitness or similitude between the figure and that which it illustrates, and it should not be taken for granted that a hazy likeness between the two is sufficient. (*b*) The basis of the spiritual or typical illustration should be given by Scripture itself, or by the usage of the Church and of Fathers of name. Thus, for example, it is clear from Scripture that Solomon is a type of Christ (*Heb.* i. 5), and hence there is a sufficient reason why we may explain in relation to Christ many things, which though related of Solomon, Scripture does not apply to Christ. Thus we may compare the wisdom of Solomon with the wisdom, whether increate or infused, of Christ; the wealth and the magnificence of the kingdom of Solomon with the supernatural wealth of the kingdom of the Messias; the Temple built by Solomon at his own expense with the Church built by the merits and the blood of Christ, and so on.

These two senses, the *literal* and the *typical,* are alone the senses of Scripture, but in order that what has been said may be complete, it will be proper to say a few words of two other senses, which are not unfrequently used, namely, the *consequent sense* and the *adapted sense.*

The Consequent Sense.—Those consequences and deductions which are drawn from Sacred

Scripture by direct and legitimate reasoning are said to be its *consequent sense.* It is clear that as this sense does not come either immediately or mediately from the words of Holy Writ, but is a deduction from them, it can not be called a *sense of Scripture,* although the Fathers often call it a *mystical* or a *spiritual sense.* On the other hand, it is evident that what truly and legitimately follows from the text of Holy Writ must be ascribed to the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as He without doubt foresaw what would be deduced from the words of Scripture, nay that He intended and provided that it should be so deduced, as St. Augustine teaches (*De Doctr. Christ.* iii. 27). And as a matter of fact we read in the Letter to the Romans (xv. 4): "*For what things soever were written, were written for our learning, that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.*" And in the second Letter to Timothy (iii. 16): "*All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice.*" Now, as Father Patrizi well says, there are many things in the Sacred Books which, if the words are taken by themselves, do not seem to be profitable. These things, in as far as one may say so, become profitable inasmuch as they are consequences of other things or are deductions made by us. To such consequences or deductions, as Father Patrizi adds, belongs what St. Paul often inculcates concerning the difference between the *letter* and the *spirit* (*Rom.* ii. 27-29, vii. 6, 2 *Cor.* iii. 6).

The Adapted Sense.—The *adapted* or *accommodated sense* is had when the words of Sacred

Writ are made to signify something wholly different from that which the Holy Ghost intended to express. Of course it is clear to every one that this *adapted sense* is not the Scriptural sense. The basis of this adaptation or accommodation is a certain similarity, either in words or things, existing between the text of Scripture and that to which it is adapted. Of the first kind of similarity, that is, words, we have an example when, to signify how God wonderfully manifests Himself in His saints, we quote the words of Psalm LXVII (36): "*God is wonderful in His saints,*" by which the Psalmist intended to express the marvelous manifestation of God *in His sanctuary,* as is clear both from the context and from the Hebrew text. So also, to give another example, when to point out the effects of good and evil companionship, the words of Psalm XVII (25, 26) are quoted: "*With the holy Thou wilt be holy . . . with the perverse Thou wilt be perverted,*" by these words the Psalmist, addressing God, means to say that His justice will deal with every one as he merits, to the righteous He will give reward according to his righteousness and to the perverse He will inflict punishment according to his perversity. It is clear to every one that this sort of adaptation, said to be by *allusion,* is a mere play upon words, the words of Scripture being made to bear a wholly different meaning from that which they have in the sentences quoted.

A similarity *of things,* or a *real* likeness is had, when what Scripture affirms of one determinate subject is in a certain sense also verified in another subject, which latter, however. was not in-

tended by the inspired writer. This adaptation has for its basis a similitude or likeness much stronger than the adaptation by *allusion,* since the words of Scripture, though applied to another subject, nevertheless still preserve their original meaning. This kind of adaptation, said to be *by extension,* is frequently used by the Fathers and by the Church in the Sacred Liturgy. Thus in the Divine Office the Church applies to various saints what Holy Writ says of Noah: "*Noah was found perfect and just, and in the time of wrath he was made a reconciliation*" (*Ecclus.* xliv. 17); and of Abraham: "*There was not found the like of him, who kept the Law of the Most High* (*ibid.* 20). Scripture itself furnishes us examples of each adaptation. Thus St. Paul in his Letter to the Hebrews (xiii. 5) applies to all Christians the words which in Scripture are spoken to Josue: "*I will not leave thee nor forsake thee*" (*Jos.* i. 5). So also in St. Matthew (vii. 23), there is an adaptation of a text of Psalm VI (9) and another from Micheas (vii. 6) in Chapter X (36); there is another from *Osee* (x. 8), in St. Luke (xxiii. 30), and so on.

So, also, where there is no question of a rigorous argument, or of proving a dogma, or of refuting an error, we may use the adapted, or non-Scriptural sense, provided always that there is a certain *analogy,* or *likeness* between the things, as has been said above,[1] and provided further that the words of Scripture are not applied to impious,

[1] Hence it would be quite improper to take as a text on the occasion of the celebration of the foundation of a school the words of Proverbs (ix. 1): *Wisdom hath built herself a house.*

or even to vain or frivolous things, as the Council of Trent admonishes and enjoins (Sess. IV. Decret. de edit. et una Sacr. Libr.).

II

Rules for Interpreting Scripture

It is undoubtedly true that the Scriptures are of themselves obscure and that he who would understand their true meaning must necessarily follow the rules which the Church and the Fathers have laid down and which constant usage has approved and confirmed. Now the Books of Holy Writ may be considered under two aspects: first, they may be considered as books written by men, in the language of men, and intended to be read and understood by men; and next, they may be considered as divine books, having for their chief author the Holy Ghost, and committed to the Church as their custodian and authentic interpreter. According to this twofold aspect the rules of Scriptural interpretation are divided by interpreters into two classes: *general* rules, also called rules of *grammatical-historical interpretation,* and *particular* rules, also called rules *of Catholic interpretation.* The former are common to all books of human authorship; the latter are proper to Sacred Scripture as a divine Book. We shall speak briefly of each.

General Rules, or *Rules of Grammatical-Historical Interpretation.*—Since every word may have more than one meaning, two things are required to get at the meaning of any writer; first, it is necessary to know the various meanings of the words he

uses, and next, it is necessary to be able to determine which of these meanings the writer attaches to the words in any given sentence. Now this is essential in order correctly to understand the Sacred Scriptures, regarded simply as a book written by men, in the language of men, and intended for men.

I. First of all, then, it is necessary to know the various meanings of the words of Scripture, and for this, as is clear, besides the knowledge of the *Latin* tongue, in which the Vulgate is written, a knowledge of *Greek* and *Hebrew* is also required, in order, when necessary, to be able to refer to the original text. For, though, as even honest Protestants admit, the version of the *Vulgate* is excellent, nevertheless it occasionally uses obscure or ambiguous words or phrases, sometimes follows inexact readings, and again does not always give the full force of the Greek and Hebrew text, there being, as St. Augustine says, some words in every language that can not be translated into another: *In usum alterius linguæ per interpretationem transire non possunt* (Doctr. Christ. ii. 11). Add to this the fact that in the Vulgate, as also in the original Greek text, there are many Hebrew idioms, rightly to understand which a knowledge of the Hebrew language is necessary.[1]

[1]Tirino gives a long list of such idioms in the introduction to his commentary, some of which it will be well here to reproduce.

Thus, *benedicere* by an antiphrasis means sometimes *maledicere* (*Job* i. 11, etc.); *revelare aurem alicujus* means to admonish one or to tell him what he did not know before; *cornu* is often equivalent to power or glory; *caput canis*, to a vile thing; *caliæ*, to a portion given to any one, or to a lot, good or bad, which falls to each; *onus*, to a prophecy foretelling affliction and punishment; *os gladii*, to the point of a sword; *pingues*, to men powerful and

Still one who does not know the Greek and Hebrew languages, or knows them only imperfectly, need not be discouraged, as this defect can be partially supplied:

1. It may be supplied by assiduously reading the Sacred Scriptures, as it frequently happens that what is obscure or ambiguous in one place may be clearly expressed in another.

2. Next, it may be supplied by studying the Fathers and consulting interpreters. Not only do the Fathers get at the doctrine of Holy Scripture, but their very style is formed on that of Holy Scripture, so that frequently in reading a Father of the Church we seem to be reading a prophet, or an evangelist, or the apostle Paul, with the additional advantage that the Father is clearer. Hence in trying to get at the real meaning of Scripture the reading of the works of the Fathers is of immense advantage. This is especially true respecting the works of the Fathers in which they profoundly comment on some part of Scripture. To the works of the Fathers must be added the com-

rich; *habere vel ponere in manibus animam suam,* to expose one's life to danger; *pactum salis,* to a steadfast and honest agreement; *portæ,* to forensic judgments and also to power; *vasa,* any instruments whatever; *vasa belli,* to weapons of war; *vasa psalmi et cantici,* to musical instruments; *vasa mortis,* to whatever causes death; *filiæ pharetræ,* to arrows or shafts; *filii prophetarum,* to disciples of the prophets; *filii iniquitates,* to wicked men; *filii gehennæ,* to those meriting hell; *visio,* to the thing seen; *auditus,* to the thing heard; *timor,* to what is feared; *ebreitas,* to what makes drunk; *generatio et generatio,* to all generations; *tribus tribus,* to all tribes; *vir vir,* to every man; *plorans ploravit,* to, he wept bitterly; *veniens veniet,* to, he will surely come; *morieris et non vives,* to, thou shalt certainly die; *mons Dei,* to a high mountain; *leones Dei,* to strong, excellent lions; *canticum canticorum,* to the best of songs; *vanitas vanitatum,* to a most vain thing; *lucerna quæ non extinguetur,* to great continuous prosperity; *filius hominis,* to man, etc.

mentaries of later interpreters, whose learning, erudition, skill in criticism, and knowledge of the ancient tongues have greatly aided in getting a correct and clear understanding of the Scripture.

II. It is not enough to know the various meanings of the words of Scripture; it is further necessary to determine in which of these meanings the various words are used by the sacred writers in each instance.

First of all, the general rule must be borne in mind, that a word or phrase is not to be taken in a *figurative sense* except when there is a strong reason for not taking it in its *proper sense.* To determine which of the various proper or natural meanings of this or that word, or of this or that phrase, is the one intended by the inspired writer, it will be well to observe the following:

(*a*) Take note of the argument, or of the subject-matter of the Book, or of that portion of it that one wishes to interpret. Thus from the argument of St. Paul in his Letter to the Galatians, one understands at once that when he speaks of the *Law,* he means the Mosaic Law.

(*b*) Next, take note of the scope which the speaker or writer proposes to himself, and to the occasion or motive of his writing or speaking. Thus, if we keep before our eyes the scope of Moses in the beginning of Genesis, which was certainly not to set before us the nature of created things, we shall understand how ridiculous is the attempt of those who would interpret the language as if he were a physicist of our own day. So again if we consider the occasion of these words of Christ: "*There are eunuchs, who have made*

themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* xix. 12), that they were elicited by the comment of the disciples: *"If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry"* (*ibid.* 10), we understand that the words of Christ refer to celibacy.

(*c*) Consider the context of the writing or discourse. Every one knows how necessary this is rightly to understand a phrase or a proposition. What may not a writer, contrary to his intention, be made to say, if his sentences are not considered in relation to the context in which they stand?

(*d*) Compare parallel passages, which either by reason of expressions or by reason of the subject-matter, are very similar to one another, for it often happens that one throws light on the other and makes the meaning clear. Thus the words: *"My soul is continually in my hands"* (*Ps.* cxviii. 109) mean to expose one's life to danger, as we learn by comparing this with the parallel passages of Judges (xii. 3), and of Kings (1. xix. 5), where we find the same expression. So also the apparition of Jesus Christ after His resurrection, referred to in St. Mark (xvi. 12, 13), is illustrated by the narrative of St. Luke (xxiv. 13 et seq).

(*e*) Finally, consider who wrote the Book, or delivered the discourse that is being interpreted, when he lived, what was his nationality, what his character and attainments, to whom the Book was immediately directed or the discourse delivered, and lastly, what were the *conditions, religious and civil,* of that age. And, in fact, since it is undoubtedly true that every one in writing or speaking is more or less influenced by his temperament and

training and by his peculiar way of looking at things, and that the idea expressed by a word may vary according to the various writers who use it, and since it is also undoubtedly true that every one writes or speaks in such a way as to be best understood by those for whom his writing or his discourse is intended, and that every speaker or writer takes for granted as known many things relative to the laws and customs, the opinions and usages of his time, it is evident that in order the better to determine the meaning of the Scriptures, it will be necessary to take into account who the speaker or writer was, the time and place in which he lived, his character and acquirements,[1] the readers or hearers for whom he primarily wrote or spoke, the religious and political conditions of the age, and the manners and customs of ancient peoples. This is particularly true of the Jews, to whose history so large a part of the Sacred Scripture is devoted.

III

Particular Rule or Rules of Catholic Interpretation

THE rules thus far laid down, though sufficient for the interpretation of any ordinary composition, are not sufficient for the interpretation of Sacred Scripture, which is a divine Book, God being its chief author, and is committed to the Catholic Church, as its custodian and interpreter. For

[1]When it is not certain who is the author of a Book we must be content with determining and taking into account the time when and the place where it was written.

this reason the interpretation of it is subject to special rules.

I. First of all, since God is the chief author of Sacred Scripture and since we are therefore dealing with divine Books, it follows:

(*a*) That in order properly to understand Scripture the interpreter must be a man of *humility,* of *integrity of life,* and of *prayer.* Of *humility,* because we read in Proverbs (xi. 2): "*Where humility is, there also is wisdom.*" Let any one who would search the hidden meaning of Scripture, bringing to the task a proud mind, reflect attentively on what St. Augustine very candidly says of himself: "*Quum primo puer ad divinas Scripturas ante vellem afferre acumen discutiendi, quam pietatem quærendi, ego ipse contra me perversis moribus claudebam januas Domini; quum pulsare deberem ut aperiretur, addebam ut clauderetur. Superbus enim audebam quærere quod nisi humilis non potest invenire* (Serm. 51. n. 5).

Of integrity of life—for it is said in Wisdom (i. 4): "*Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul nor dwell in a body subject to sins.*"

And since light, rightly to understand Scripture, can come only from God, who is the author of Scripture, therefore study must be accompanied with prayer, which St. Augustine says is of all things most necessary. "*Non solum,*" he says, "*admonendi sunt studiosi venerabilium litterarum, ut in Scripturis Sanctis genera locutionum sciant, et quomodo apud eas aliquid dici soleat vigilanter advertant, memoriterque retineant; verum etiam quod est præcipue et maxime necessarium, orent ut intelligant*" (Doctr. Christ. iii. 37).

(*b*) Holy Scripture, being the word of God, can contain no error, and hence any interpretation that would imply that the inspired writer had said anything impious, or absurd, or in the slightest erroneous, must be absolutely rejected. In such a case the words of St. Augustine are to be borne in mind: "*In Scripturas quid absurdum moverit, non licet dicere: auctor hujus libri non tenuit veritatem; sed, aut codex mendosus est, aut interpres erravit, aut tu non intelligis* (Contra Faust. ii. 2). But this is to be understood only in regard to the inspired writer and to what he himself says as his own, and not in regard to what he quotes as said by another, unless the words quoted are God's, or a person's who speaks in God's name, or as inspired by God. As a matter of fact, Sacred History often quotes words uttered by others that are stupid, or commands that are impious, or discourses that are blasphemous, as, for example, "*the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*" (*Ps.* iii. 1). So also the answer of Rabsaces (4 *Kings* xviii. 27 seq.), and the speech of Nabuchodonosor (*Dan.* iii. 14 seq.). Such errors and impieties are not to be ascribed to Sacred Scripture, as they were not spoken, but only quoted, by the author. From the fact that they are quoted by the inspired author all that can be inferred is that they are *really* the words and discourses of those to whom they are attributed.

Very often, however, words quoted by an inspired author, as spoken by others, have a divine authority and must be held to be free from error of any kind. This is true when the words quoted

by a sacred author are the words of God, or of the good angels (for example, those of the Archangel Gabriel, sent of God to the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth, Luke [i. 2 et seq.]), or finally of man, speaking under divine inspiration. This may be determined either by the authority of Sacred Scripture itself, or by the consent of the Church. *By the authority of Sacred Scripture,* as when an inspired author, quoting words uttered by another, introduces them by a solemn formula, which is never used in Scripture except to indicate that the words are inspired, such as: *"It is written,"* or *"Holy Writ says,"* and the like; of this usage there is an example in St. Paul (1 *Cor.* iii. 19), where he cites the words of one of the friends of Job. Again, when the sacred author bears witness that those, whose words he quotes, have in speaking been *filled with the Holy Ghost,* as in the case of St. Elizabeth (*Luke* i. 41 et seq.), of Zachary (*Luke* i. 67 et seq.), and of others. By the *consent of the Church,* that is, when the entire Church is unanimous regarding as divinely inspired canticles and discourses contained in Scripture, as, for example, the *Magnificat.*

(*c*) In Sacred Scripture there can be no *real* contradiction, since God can not contradict Himself. Hence any interpretation, in which Sacred Scripture is made *really* to contradict itself can not by any means be admitted. The *antilogies* to be met with in the Sacred Books are partly due either to the defects of the present text, or to the inaccuracy of the version, which an inspection of the codices and a comparison of them with the ancient versions will aid in removing; or they are

merely *apparent,* and will be readily cleared away by observing the following rules:

1. Too much stress should not be laid on the meaning in which words are used by profane writers, for the same words are frequently used in a very different sense by sacred writers. Thus, for example, the word *primogenitus,* which, as St. Jerome notes (Contra Halvid.) in Sacred Scripture indicates not only one, after whom come other brothers, but also simply one, before whom there were no other brothers, and hence the words of St. Matthew (*Rom.* i. 25): "*And he knew her not until she brought forth her first-born son,*" in no way contradict the virginity of the Blessed Virgin.

2. So, also, the same word may at times be taken by sacred writers in different senses, and those senses are to be determined by the context. Hence there is no contradiction between St. Paul, when he says: "*For we account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the Law*" (*Rom.* iii. 28), and St. James, when he says: "*Do you see that by works a man is justified and not by faith only*" (iii. 24), since St. Paul by the "*works of the Law*" means the works that precede faith, and precisely the works of the *Mosaic Law,* which of itself did not confer grace, and hence could not justify; while St. James by the word "*works*" means the naturally good works that accompany and follow faith and are its life, for "*faith without good works is dead*" (*James* ii. 26).

3. It is well to distinguish the various aspects in which the same object may be, and often is considered. So considered, there is no possible contradiction in the two phrases of Jesus Christ: "*I*

and the Father are one" (*John* x. 30), and "*The Father is greater than I*" (*ibid.* xiv. 28), since in the first He speaks of Himself as God, and in the second, on the contrary, He speaks of Himself as man.

4. So also we must consider the different times in relation to which the same object is spoken of. In this way we shall easily reconcile the prophecies, which at one time foretell events and calamities to the Hebrew people, and at another prosperity and peace; which now foretell the ignominy, humiliation, and passion of the Messias and again His glory, power, and victory.

5. Narratives of different facts, no matter how closely they resemble one another, must not be confused by referring them to one single fact. Thus, for example, the narrative of the casting out of the profaners of the Temple, as given by St. John (ii. 13 et seq.), is not to be confounded with that given by St. Matthew (xxi. 120 et seq.), by St. Mark (xi. 15 et seq.), and by St. Luke (xix. 45 et seq.); so, also, neither is the apparition of the two angels to the pious women after Mary Magdalen's return to the city, as recorded by St. Luke (xxiv. 4-7), to be confounded with the apparition of the two angels to Mary Magdalen, after her return to the sepulcher, as recorded by St. John (xx. 11-13).

6. With regard to the various narratives of the same facts, which do not seem to harmonize one with the other, it should be borne in mind that one writer frequently narrates concisely what another narrates diffusely and more accurately, that one omits circumstances which another relates,

and that one follows one order and another a different one, but all this by no means constitutes a *true* and a *real* contradiction in the various narratives. Hence St. Augustine says: "*Quod alius aliud verborum ordinem tenet, non est utique contrarium; neque illud contrarium est, si alius dicit quod alius prætermittit*" (De Cons. Evang. ii. 12). So also St. Chrysostom: "*Aliud est diverso, aliud contrario, modo narrare; prius enim illud dissonantiam non gignit aut pugnam*" (Homil. de Paralyt. n. 3). Examples of this are common in the Gospels. It will be sufficient to refer to the healing of the centurion's servant, in briefly relating which St. Matthew (viii. 5 et seq.) puts words into the mouth of the centurion himself, which the centurion directed the ancients of the Jews and his friends to say to Jesus, as we learn from St. Luke (vii. 2 et seq.), who relates the fact more at length.

(*d*) There can be no real contradiction between Sacred Scripture and science, since it is impossible that truth should contradict truth. Therefore we should have no fear of new discoveries and of the continued progress of the sciences, as if they could in any way shake the foundations of our faith; rather, we should glory in and, if we can, encourage such studies, and in matter of fact the Church does glory in them and encourages them, since we are perfectly sure that the progress of science will result in the triumph and the confirmation of revealed truth, as the experience of the past has most signally proved.[1]

[1]On this subject consult the splendid work of *Cardinal Wiseman;* Science and Revealed Religion.

(*e*) Frequent use is made in the Gospel of the parable, a most excellent means of instructing the people. In interpreting the parable the interpreter should keep before his mind the purpose Christ had in view, or the lesson He intended to convey by it, and he should not try to adjust every minutest detail of it to the doctrine that is being taught, as St. John Chrysostom very well remarks. Keeping this in mind it will be easy to explain, for example, the parable of the unjust steward and many others.

It is to be noted, however, that while a contradiction between *Scripture* and *science* is impossible, it is not impossible between an interpreter of Scripture and a cultivator of science; between these there may be a contradiction, either when the interpreter puts forth as the sense of Scripture that which is not its sense, or when the scientist enunciates as the teaching of science that which science does not teach. Neither should state more than he is justified in stating.

On the one hand the scientist should not state as certain that which is doubtful, or assume as established that which is only a hypothesis, more or less probable and well founded. How many things have scientists hastily given out as unquestionable, which are now either called in doubt or rejected as false!

On the other hand, the sacred interpreter should put in practice the teaching of St. Augustine: "*In rebus obscuris atque a nostris oculis remotissimis, si qua inde scripta etiam divina legerimus, quæ possint salva fide, qua imbuimur, alias atque alias parere sententias, in nullam earum nos præcipiti*

affirmatione ita projiciamus, ut si forte diligentius discussa veritas eam recte labefacteverit, corruamus, non pro sententia divinarum Scripturarum, sed pro nostra ita dimicantes, ut eam velimus Scripturarum esse, quæ nostra est, quum potius eam, quæ Scripturarum est, nostram esse velle debeamus'' (De Gen. ad litt. i. 18). Therefore not to run the risk of making Scripture contradict science, let the sacred interpreter always bear in mind:

I. That Sacred Scripture is not a scientific work, but a Book for the people, and hence, as we can not expect to find in it scientific language, such as might be employed by a naturalist of our own day, so also we are not to insist too rigorously on the terms used in it, because the sacred writers spoke, as we also speak, the language of the people, a language that does not express things as they are in themselves, but as they seem to be to the senses. Thus spoke Moses when he wrote: *''God made two great lights, a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night, and stars''* (*Gen.* i. 16). So also spoke Josue, when he commanded the sun *not to move,* as it is written: *''The sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down the space of one day''* (x. 12, 13). So again the Preacher in describing the sun *''that riseth and goeth down, and returneth to his place, and there rising again, maketh his round by the south and turneth again to the north''* (*Eccles.* i. 5, 6). Hence it would be an error to pretend to prove from Moses that the sun and the moon are the largest of the heavenly bodies; and so also it would be an error

to try to prove from Josue and Ecclesiasticus that the sun moves and the earth stands still.

Again, he should bear in mind that the sacred writers wrote for their contemporaries and to be understood by them, and hence in regard to many things they spoke according to contemporary thought and opinion and according to the reality of things. This is what St. Jerome expressly says: "*Multa in Scripturis Sacris dicuntur juxta opinionem illius temporis, quo gesta referuntur, et non juxta quod rei veritas continebat*" (In *Jer.* xxviii. 10). "*Quot difficultates,*" adds Father Cornely, "*nunquam essent propositæ, si omnes interpretes semper Sti Hieronymi monitum præ oculis habuissent.*"

II. Sacred Scripture must also be looked upon as a Book committed to the Church as its custodian and authentic interpreter, and so considered it is necessary to follow the rule laid down by the Council of Trent: "*Ad coercenda petulantia ingenia* (Sacrosancta Synodus) *decernit, ut nemo suæ prudentiæ innixus, in rebus fidei et morum ad edificationem doctrinæ Christianæ pertinentium, Sacras Scripturas ad suos sensus contorquens, contra eum sensum quem tenuit et tenet Sancta Mater Ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu et interpretatione Scripturarum Sacrarum, aut etiam contra unanimum consensum Patrum, ipsam Scripturam Sacram interpretari audeat*" (Sess. iv. Decret. de edit. et usu Sacr. Libr.). This decree was confirmed by the Vatican Council (Const. de fide Cathol. c. 2).

The sacred interpreter, then, in whatever relates to faith and morals, will

(*a*) Never dare to interpret Scripture contrary to the sense held by the Catholic Church, and he will cheerfully accept that interpretation which the Church either *explicitly* or *implicitly* determines and sets forth, either in her definitions, or in her living and daily teaching, confident that this, and no other, is the true interpretation,[1] and he will be prompt to reject any interpretation whatever that contradicts in any way the teaching of the Church.

(*b*) He will never dare to interpret Sacred Scripture in a sense contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, but cheerfully accept the interpretation which the Fathers, the witnesses to apostolic doctrine and the channels of tradition, unanimously give. It is not necessary that this unanimity be *physical,* as *moral* unanimity will suffice. It is necessary that the Fathers, however, in their interpretation should speak *assertatively* and not give an opinion that is doubtful, or conjectural or probable, for in this case they can claim no more authority than a private teacher.

True, Protestants loudly affirm that the decree of the Council of Trent has killed Catholic exegesis, has restrained, nay taken away the liberty of the interpreter, and rendered a scientific expo-

[1]Thus for example, the words of the Apostle: "*As by one man sin entered into this world*" (*Rom.* v. 12) must be interpreted as referring to original sin, this being the interpretation of the Church (Conc. Trid. Sess. v., Decr. de pecc. orig.); the words of Christ: "*Unless a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost,*" etc. (*John* iii. 5) refer to the sacrament of Baptism, this being the sense of the Church (Conc. Trid. Sess. vii, de Bapt. c. ii); the words of St. James: "*Is any one sick among you?*" etc. (v. 14) are to be understood as referring to the promulgation of the sacrament of Extreme Unction, the Church having so declared (Conc. Trid. Sess. xiv. de inst. Sacr. Extr. Unct. Cap.).

sition of Sacred Scripture impossible. But as Father Cornely very well says: "*At quid loquantur ignorant. Nam pharus, qui nautæ portum indicat eumque impedit ne navem suam in scopulos impellat, ejus libertatem restringet vel aufert? Num magister, qui discipulo sensum thematis explicat, veram et scientificam thematis interpretationem reddit impossibilem? Num Concilium illud, post quod Catholica exegesis majores, quam ulla retro ætate, triumphos egit, Catholicam exegesim occidisse dici potest? Sine ullo dubio legibus quas interpreti tradit, errandi licentia restricta est, at quis non videt ejusmodi restrictione veram et genuinam scientiam juvari ac promoveri?*" And we should give thanks to God not alone for giving us the Sacred Scriptures containing His word, but also for having given us in the Church a safe and authentic interpreter of them.

A Small Geographical, Historical, and Archæological Dictionary for Understanding the New Testament

A

Abilena, a part of Coelo-Syria, or Lower Syria, so called from Abila its capital. This country was the tetrarchy of Lysanias when John Baptist began preaching (*Luke* iii. 1).

Aceldama, or Field of Blood, this name was given to the field bought from a potter as a burial place for strangers by the chief priests with the thirty pieces of silver received for the betrayal of Jesus (*Matt.* xxvii. 6 et seq.).

Achaia, a name which, at the time of the apostles, was given to the whole of Greece. St. Paul founded many churches there, to which he directed all his Letters entitled, *To the Corinthians.*

Acts of the Apostles, a Book of the New Testament, written by St. Luke, containing a narrative of the acts of the apostles (of course not of all of them) after the ascension of Jesus Christ. The narrative goes as far as the first imprisonment in Rome of St. Paul.

Agabus, one of the prophets of the New Testament who predicted a great famine for the whole Roman Empire (*Acts* xi. 28) and foretold to St. Paul that he would be bound hand and foot and cast into prison by the Jews in Jerusalem (*Acts* xxi. 10, 11).

Alexandria, the principal city of Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great in the year 332 before Christ. The inhabitants were partly *Jewish Libertines* (slaves who had been set free), who disputed with Stephen, and suborned men to say that they had heard him utter words of blasphemy against Moses and against God (*Acts* vi. 9 et seq.).

Amphipolis, a city of Macedonia, situated on the River Strymon, so called because the river runs almost around the city, through which St. Paul passed on his way from Philippi to Thessalonica (*Acts* xvii. 1).

Amphora, see *Measure.*

Ananias, a deacon or priest of Damascus by whom Saul was baptized (*Acts* ix. 10 et seq.).

Ananias, a high-priest, who accused St. Paul before Procurator Felix (*Acts* xxiv. 1).

Ananias, the husband of Saphira, both of whom were stricken dead for having lied to the Holy Ghost (*Acts* v. 1 et seq.).

Anti-Christ, a word that ordinarily signifies the *enemy of Christ;* specifically however, it means *the man of sin—the son of perdition—that wicked one* (2 *Thess.* ii. 3, 8), who before the second coming of Christ will stir up a frightful persecution against Christians.

Antioch, capital of Syria, situated on the River Orontes. Here the followers of Christ were first called *Christians* (*Acts* xi. 26), and here, according to an ancient tradition, St. Peter established his see before going to Rome. There is another Antioch in Pisidia in Asia Minor (*Acts* xiii. 14).

Apocalypse, or *Revelations,* a prophetical Book of the New Testament, in which St. John gives an account of the heavenly vision that he had during his exile on the Island of Patmos. It is a Book very difficult to interpret.

Apollo, a native of Alexandria. Scripture says he was *an eloquent man,* and, *one mighty in the Scriptures* (*Acts* xviii. 24). While still a catechumen he was carefully instructed in the way of the Lord by Priscilla and Aquila (*ibid.* 26). Having gone to Achaia he *helped them much who believed* (*ibid.* 27), and St. Paul says that Apollo by his preaching watered what he himself had planted (1 *Cor.* iii. 6).

Apollonia, a city of Macedonia through which St. Paul passed in going from Philippi to Thessalonica (*Acts* xvii. 1).

Appio, or *Appii Forum,* a station on the Via Appia, about forty-three miles from Rome, whither some Christians of Rome went to meet St. Paul, when they learned that the Apostle was approaching the city (*Acts* xxviii. 15).

Aquila, a native of Pontus, whom together with his wife Prisca or Priscilla, the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Letters* of St. Paul mention as worthy co-operators in the spread of the Gospel. St. Paul partook of their hospitality at Corinth, and being like them a tent-maker by trade, labored with them the whole week, so as not to be a burden to his neophytes, and preached in the Synagogue on the Sabbath (*Acts* xviii. 2-4). It was they, also, who carefully instructed Apollo in the way of the Lord (*ibid.* v. 26), and to save the Apostle they exposed their own lives to peril (*Rom.* xvi. 3, 4).

Arabia, an extensive peninsula in the southwest of Asia. In Scripture, however, this name would seem to be used only to denote that territory extending on the east and south of Palestine to the Gulf of Arabia or the Red Sea.

Archisynagogus, the ruler of the Synagogue who regulated the worship and the religious offices usually performed in the Synagogue and decided on the admission of proselytes. Such was Jairus, whose daughter Jesus Christ raised to life (*Matt.* ix. 18 et seq.).

Areopagus, or *Hill of Mars,* famous Athenian tribunal, before which St. Paul delivered the eloquent address, given in the Acts (xvii. 22 et seq.), by which he converted to the Faith Dionysius, one of the judges of the Areopagus.

Aretas, King of Arabia. He gave his daughter in marriage to Herod Antipas, who, falling in love with Herodias, repudiated her. After the death of Tiberius he extended his dominion over Damascus and all Syria. It was the prefect of Aretas who tried to capture St. Paul at Damascus (2 *Cor.* xi. 32).

Arimathæa, a city of Judea, as to the precise site of which the learned do not agree. Joseph, who went to Pilate and obtained the body of Christ, which he buried in his own new tomb, hewn out of the rock, was of Arimathæa (*Matt.* xxvii. 57 et seq.).

Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica in Macedonia. Converted by St. Paul, he became his companion and co-worker in his apostolical labors. He accompanied the Apostle from Cæsarea to Rome and, to comfort and serve him, cheerfully went to prison with him. He is called by St. Paul his *fellow-prisoner* (*Col.* iv. 10).

Ascalon, a city in the land of the Philistines, the birthplace of Herod the Great, by whom it was greatly beautified.

Aser, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, to the northwest of Palestine.

Asphaltites, see *Dead Sea.*

Asia, in Sacred Scripture this name denotes the peninsula of Asia Minor, called now *Anatolia.* Sometimes it has a still more restricted sense and denotes only the Roman province of Asia, or that part of Asia Minor along the Ægean Sea and bounded on the north by Bithynia.

Athens, capital city of Attica, belonging to the Roman province of Achaia.

Attalia, a city of Pamphylia in Asia Minor, through which St. Paul passed (*Acts* xiv. 24).

Azotus, or *Ashdod,* a fortified city in the country of the Philistines, and the seat of the worship of the idol Dagon. It was to this city that Philip, the Deacon, was transported by the Spirit of the Lord after he had baptized the *eunuch of Candace,* queen of the Ethiopians (*Acts* viii. 39, 40).

Azym, see *Feasts.*

B

Babylon, a famous city of Mesopotamia on the River Euphrates. St. Peter in his first Epistle (v. 13) and St. John in many places in the Apocalypse, use the name metaphorically to indicate the city of Rome. Nothing now remains of Babylon but ruins.

Barnabas, a native of Cyprus and a distinguished co-laborer with St. Paul in his apostolic ministry. He is often mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles.* Like St. Paul he was a disciple of Gamaliel.

Beelzebub, one of the divinities worshiped by the inhabitants of Accaron, a city of the Philistines (4 *Kings* i. 2). The Hebrews were accustomed to designate by this name the prince of demons (*Matt.* xii. 24; *Mark* iii. 22, et seq.).

Benjamin, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, in the land of which was situated Jerusalem. St. Paul was of this tribe (*Phil.* iii. 5).

Bethania, a village often mentioned in the Holy Gospels. Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, lived there. It was about two miles from Jerusalem. There was also another *Bethania* on the banks of the Jordan, where John Baptist baptized (*John* i. 28), which is also named *Bethabara* in many Greek codices.

Bethlehem, a city of the tribe of Juda, called in early times *Ephrata*, where in a stable the divine Redeemer was born. It was also the birthplace of David. It is situated on a hill about five miles south of Jerusalem. It is not to be confounded with another Bethlehem, a city of the tribe of Zabulon.

Bethphage, a hamlet near Bethania, on the side of the Mount of Olives. From this place Jesus set out, seated on the foal of an ass, to make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Bethsaida, or *Bethesda*, a swimming-pool in Jerusalem, called Probatica, or *Of the sheep*, from the gate near which it was, and which was known as the Sheep-gate (cf. 2 Esd. iii. 1, 32; xii. 38). It is celebrated because of what St. John says of it in his Gospel (v. 2-4).

Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, situated on the western shore of the Lake of Tiberias, not far from Corozain and Capharnaum. It was the birthplace of Peter, Andrew, and Philip, and was severely rebuked by Jesus Christ for its wilfulness and obstinacy (*Matt.* xi. 20 et seq.). There was another Bethsaida, called later on *Julias*, on the northeast of the same lake and on the left of the Jordan (*Luke* ix. 10).

Bithynia, a province of Asia Minor to the north of Phrygia and Galatia, where the Holy Ghost forbade St. Paul to preach the Gospel (*Acts* xvi. 7).

C

Cæsarea of Palestine, a city on the Mediterranean, built by Herod the Great. Here St. Paul was retained a prisoner before he appealed to Cæsar (*Acts* xxiii. 33 seq.). There was a second *Cæsarea,* north of Palestine at the base of *Mount Hermon,* called *Cæsarea Philippi* from Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis, who enlarged and embellished it. It was in this latter Cæsarea that St. Peter received from Jesus Christ the promise of the Primacy (*Matt.* xvi. 13 et seq.).

Calvary, or *Golgotha,* a hill near and to the northwest of Jerusalem, on which Jesus Christ was crucified and buried.

Cana, a city of Galilee between Nazareth and Capharnaum, celebrated as the place of the first miracle wrought by Jesus Christ (*John* ii. 1 et seq.). It must not be confounded with another *Cana* not far from Tyre in Phenecia, of the tribe of Aser.

Candace, queen of the Ethiopians (*Acts* viii. 27).

Capharnaum, a city of Galilee, of the tribe of Nepthali, on the northwest of the Lake of Tiberias, not far from Bethsaida and Corozain and commercially very important in the time of Our Lord, who dwelt there for a long time and there wrought many miracles, so that the city came to be called the city of Jesus. It was at Capharnaum that Jesus Christ foretold the institution of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist (*John* vi. 24 et seq.).

Cappadocia, an eastern province of Asia Minor, to the Christians of which St. Peter addressed his two Letters.

Cedron, a brook to the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives.

Centurion, the captain of a hundred soldiers.

Cilicia, southeastern province of Asia Minor, evangelized by St. Paul (*Acts* xv. 36-41). The Apostle was born at Tarsus in Cilicia.

Circumcision, a religious rite of the Hebrews in which the prepuce of male children was cut on the eighth day after birth. It was ordained by God Himself as a token of the covenant between Him and His people (*Gen.* xvii. 11, 12). Jesus Christ Himself submitted to this rite (*Luke* xi. 21).

Colosse, a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, evangelized by Epaphras, himself a Colossian and a disciple of St. Paul. During his first imprisonment at Rome St. Paul wrote a Letter to the Christians of Colosse which he sent by Tychicus and Onesimus.

Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, a flourishing commercial city, very wealthy and also very corrupt. There remain to us two Letters of St. Paul addressed to the Christians of the Church of Corinth, founded by him, and to all Christians of Achaia. From the first of these Letters it appears (1 *Cor.* ix) that the Apostle wrote another Letter to the Corinthians, which has been lost.

Cornelius, the centurion. He was the first Gentile received into the Church by St. Peter (*Acts* x. 1 et seq.).

Corozain, a city of Galilee bitterly upbraided by Jesus Christ, who had wrought there many miracles (*Matt.* xi. 20 et seq.). It was situated on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias, near Capharnaum and Bethsaida.

Crete, now Candia, a mountainous island of the Mediterranean, where St. Paul halted on his way from Cæsarea to Rome (*Acts* xxvii. 7 et seq.), and of which he constituted Titus, his disciple, bishop (*Titus* i. 5.).

Cyprus, an island of the Mediterranean to the south of Cilicia. It was the native country of Barnabas, who together with St. Paul traversed the whole of it in their apostolic journeys (*Acts* xiii. 4 et seq.).

Cyrene, a city of that part of northern Africa anciently called Cyrenaica, Simon, who was forced to carry the cross of Jesus Christ, was of Cyrene.

D

Dalmatia, a strip of country lying along the northeast coast of the Adriatic, evangelized by Titus (2 *Tim.* iv. 10).

Damascus, the capital of Syria and a very ancient city, chiefly celebrated as being the place where St. Paul was baptized (*Acts* ix. 8 et seq.).

Dan, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Its territory lay quite near the sea.

Day, the civil day of the Hebrews began in the evening, and extended from evening to evening. The natural day, extending from sunrise to sunset, was divided into twelve hours, and

distributed into four parts, which took their names from the hours set apart for prayer, namely, *first*, *third*, *sixth*, and *ninth*, names frequently to be met in the New Testament. The *first*, ran from sunrise until nine o'clock in the morning; the *third*, from nine o'clock until mid-day; the *sixth*, from mid-day until three in the afternoon; and the *ninth* from three in the afternoon until sunset. The several days of the week, with the exception of Saturday, which was called the *Sabbath*, had no distinctive names among the Hebrews.

Dead Sea, or *Lacus Asphaltites*, a lake of Galilee, into which the Jordan empties. It occupies the plain where was once the Pentapolis, or the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adama, Segor, and Seboim, destroyed by fire from heaven. Its length from north to south is forty-one miles, and its breadth at the widest point nine and a half miles, average about eight and a half miles. It is called the Dead Sea because neither fish nor aquatic birds can live in its waters. By the Hebrews it was called the Salt Sea, the Sea of the Plain, the Lake of Lot. Its waters are thoroughly impregnated with salt.

Decapolis, a district extending along both sides of the Jordan, near the Lake of Tiberias, which contained the ten confederated Gentile cities, immediately dependent on Rome.

Decurion, a commander of ten soldiers.

Derbe, a city of Asia Minor, in the province of Lycaonia, whither Paul and Barnabas fled from the persecution in the neighboring *Iconium* (*Acts* xiv. 6).

E

Egypt, a vast and famous country, occupying the northeast of Africa, fertilized by the River Nile, which flows through it. In the New Testament it is made memorable by the fact that Joseph and Mary sought a refuge there to save the child Jesus from the wrath of Herod (*Matt.* ii. 13 et seq.).

Elam, hence *Elamites*, a country to the east of the Tigris, between Mesopotamia and Persia. The capital was Elimaides or Susa. Among the Jews of many nations, who were at Jerusalem when the apostles "*began to speak the wonderful things of God*," were also Elamites (*Acts* ii. 9).

Emmaus, a village of Judea, about nine miles northwest of Jerusalem, made famous by the fact narrated by St. Luke in his Gospel (xxiv. 13 et seq.). It must not be confounded by another *Emmaus*, lying near the sea and more distant from Jerusalem.

Epaphras, an abbreviation for *Epaphroditus*, a disciple of St. Paul, who praises him (*Col.* i. 7; iv. 12, 13), and the founder of the Church of Colosse. It would seem that he is not the same Epaphroditus of whom he speaks in his Letter to the Philippians (ii. 25; iv. 18).

Ephesus, a celebrated city of Asia Minor, famous for its Temple of Diana. St. Paul visited this city more than once to preach there, and the second time he remained about three years (*Acts* xviii. 19; xix. 1; xx. 31). Some interpreters think that the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians was a general Letter, addressed to all the Churches of Asia Minor. But this opinion is not tenable, and we must hold the traditional belief, that it was written particularly to the Church of Ephesus.

Ephraim, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, whose territory lay between the Jordan on the east and the Mediterranean on the west.

Ephrata, see *Bethlehem.*

Euphrates, a river of Asia, rising in Amenia and emptying into the Gulf of Persia, after its confluence with the Tigris.

F

Feasts. Besides the Sabbath there were various feasts celebrated by the Jews, of which some were monthly and others yearly feasts. The monthly were the *Neomenia*. The first day of every month, a solemnity among the Jews, was ushered in by the sound of trumpets and celebrated with special sacrifices. The most solemn of these days was the first of the seventh month, and as the month of the Hebrews began with the *new moon*, therefore the first day of the month was called *Neomenia*, or *new moon*. In the New Testament reference is made to this feast by St. Paul (*Col.* ii. 16).

There were three yearly feasts:

The feast of the Pasch, or of the Passing, was the greatest and the most solemn. It was a memorial of the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egypt, and took its name from the *passing* of the angel, who killed the first-born of the Egyptians and spared those of the Hebrews. It commenced with the supper of the *Paschal Lamb*, called also the *Pasch*, and continued for seven days, during which only *azym*, or unleavened bread, was eaten, and these days were also called the *days of the azyms*. The first day and the last, on which servile work was forbidden, were the most solemn.

The feast of *Pentecost*, celebrated fifty days after the Pasch, commemorated the giving of the Law by God on Mount Sinai.

The feast of *Tabernacles*, or *Scenopegia* (*John* vii. 2), in memory of the sojourning of the Hebrews in the desert, was celebrated after the harvest and lasted eight days, beginning with the fifteenth day of the month of *Tisri*. During these days the Hebrews lived under tents made of the branches of trees.

The feast of *Expiation* was a feast in expiation for sin, and was celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month, that is, of *Tisri*, with universal fasting, various sacrifices, and special ceremonies, which may be seen in *Leviticus* (xvi.). What is read there of the scapegoat is singular.

The feast of *Dedication* or *Encœnia*. This feast was celebrated on the twenty-fifth day of the month *Casleu*, lasted eight days, and commemorated the purification and the dedication of the Temple by Judas Machabeus, after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 *Mach.* iv. 52 et seq.; 2 *Mach.* x. 1 et seq.). It is mentioned also by St. John in his Gospel (x. 22).

G

Gad, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, living along the left bank of the Jordan, between the Lake of Genesareth and the Dead Sea.

Galatia, a province of Asia Minor, evangelized by St. Paul and to whose Churches he addressed one of his Letters.

Galilee, one of the provinces into which, at the time of Jesus Christ, Palestine was divided. It lay to the north and contained the cities of Nazareth, Naim, Tiberias, Cana, Bethsaida, Capharnaum, etc., and was the principal theater of the labors of Christ.

Garazin, a mountain of Samaria, near Sichem, a place held sacred by the Samaritans (*John* iv. 20).

Gehenna, valley of Hennon, a deep glen to the south of Jerusalem, where the idolatrous Jews burned their children in honor of the idol Moloch. This term is also used to express the torments of hell.

Genesareth, a lake in Galilee, called also the Lake of *Galilee* or *Tiberias*, about thirteen geographical miles long and six broad. It is also sometimes called a sea.

Gerasens, the inhabitants of a region to the east of the Jordan, near the Lake of Tiberias and famous for a miracle wrought there by Jesus Christ and recorded by St. Matthew (viii. 28 et seq.).

Gethsemani, a garden, or close, outside of Jerusalem, on the other side of the brook of Cedron, at the foot of Mount

Olivet, whither Jesus was wont to withdraw to pray and where being in an agony He sweat a bloody sweat the night before His death (*Matt.* xxvi. 36 et seq.).

Goodhavens, a port of Crete, near the city of Thalassa at which St. Paul touched when on his way from Cæsarea to Rome.

H

Hebrews, although this term is generally used in the New Testament to denote all Jews, in contradistinction to Gentiles, still it is sometimes employed to designate the Jewish Christians of Palestine, who spoke Hebrew, as distinguished from the Jewish Christians of other countries, who spoke Greek, and were known as *Hellenists* or *Greeks* (*Acts* vi. 1).

Hebrews, Letter to. Critics have endeavored to ascertain to which Hebrews the Letter of St. Paul was addressed. The most probable opinion seems to be that it was written to the Hebrews, or to the Jewish Christians, of Jerusalem, or to all the Churches of Palestine. It was most likely written in Rome, about the year 64, during St. Paul's first imprisonment there and, as his other Letters, in the Greek tongue.

Hebron, a sacerdotal city of the tribe of Juda in a mountainous country twenty Roman miles south of Jerusalem. To this place the Blessed Virgin went to visit St. Elizabeth.

Hellenists, see *Hebrews.*

Herod, a native of Ascalon, king of Judea at the time of the birth of Christ, and a tributary of Rome. It was he who ordered the Innocents to be slaughtered (*Matt.* ii. 16 et seq.). He has been undeservedly called, *The Great.*

Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and tetrarch of Galilee during the public life of Jesus Christ. It was he who murdered John Baptist (*Matt.* xiv. 1 et seq.), and mocked Jesus (*Luke* xxiii. 11).

Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great and the son of Aristobulus, who put St. James to death and cast St. Peter into prison (*Acts* xii. 1 et seq.).

Herod Agrippa II, the son of the preceding. Having gone to Cæsarea, where St. Paul was in prison, he wished to hear the Apostle

I

Iconium, a city of Asia Minor in Lycaonia, where Paul and Barnabas preached and made many conversions. Owing to an uprising against them they were forced to flee from the city (*Acts* xiv.).

Israelites, the Jews, because descended from Jacob or Israel, are so called.

Issachar, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, who dwelt to the southwest of the Lake of Genesareth on the western shore of the Jordan.

Iturea, a country to the northeast of Palestine, of which Philip, the brother of Herod, was tetrarch.

J

Jericho, an ancient city of Palestine, in Judea, about twelve miles to the northwest of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, capital city of Judea, built upon four hills, and, because of the mysteries that have taken place there, one of the most celebrated cities of the world.

Joppa, a very ancient city of Palestine and a port of the Mediterranean Sea, whither St. Peter went and raised *Tabitha* or *Dorcas* to life (*Acts* ix. 36 et seq.). It is now called *Jaffa.*

Jordan, the principal river of Palestine. Its current is very rapid. Its direct length is 134 miles, but including curves and windings the channel is about 200 miles. It varies in width from 80 to 180 feet and in depth from five to twelve feet. It has three sources, passes through the Lakes of Merom and Genesareth and empties into the Dead Sea. It is memorable in the New Testament because of the baptism of Jesus Christ in its waters.

L

Laodicea, a city of Asia Minor in Phrygia, to the Christians of which, according to the best interpretation of Colossians (iv. 16), St. Paul wrote a Letter, which has not come down to us. Not far from it are the cities of Colosse and Hierapolis.

Levites, those who served in the Temple and ministered to the priests.

Luke, a distinguished minister of the Gospel, a companion of St. Paul and a co-worker with him. He was a native of Antioch and a physician by profession. He was the writer of the Gospel that bears his name and of the Acts of the Apostles.

Lycaonia, a province of Asia Minor, in which were the cities of *Iconium*, *Lystra*, and *Derbe*, evangelized by Paul and Barnabas (*Acts* xiv. 6).

Lydda, a city of Judea, not far from Joppa, a port of the Mediterranean. It was in this city St. Peter wrought a miracle, healing the paralytic, as narrated in the Acts (ix. 32 et seq.).

Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, not far from Iconium and Derbe. Here the cripple from his mother's womb was healed by St. Paul, and the people in admiration took both him and Barnabas for gods (*Acts* xiv. 7 et seq.).

M

Macedonia, a country in the northern part of Greece, in which St. Paul founded many churches and to which he was called by a heavenly vision (*Acts* xvi. 9 et seq.).

Magdala, a village on the western shore of the Lake of Genesareth, whence Mary Magdalen received her surname.

Malta, an island to the south of Sicily, near which St. Paul was shipwrecked and in which he subsequently wrought many miracles (*Acts* xvii. 27).

Manasse, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, divided into two parts, the one dwelling between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, and the other to the east of the Lake of Genesareth.

Mark, a disciple and companion of the apostle St. Peter, whose preaching he transcribed in the Gospel that bears his name. According to critics and interpreters of name, this is the same Mark who was the companion of St. Paul, and who is mentioned in the Letters of that apostle (*Col.* iv. 10 et seq.) and who in the Acts (xii. 25) is referred to as *John Mark*. and concerning whom there was a dissension between Paul and Barnabas (*Acts* xv. 37 et seq.).

Meals, the Hebrews were accustomed to take three meals a day: one, a light one, in the morning; a second at mid-day; a third in the evening, and generally in the open air. They ate reclining on couches. It was customary before meals to give a guest a kiss, to wash his feet, and, as a special mark of honor, to anoint his head with oil or sweet-smelling unguents (*Luke* vii. 44-46).

Measure, the most common names of Hebrew measure, and their approximate value in ours, are the following:

(*a*) *Measure of capacity:*

Dry Measure: (1) *Cab* = .675 of a quart; (2) *Omer* = about 2½ quarts; (3) *Seah* (Greek *Modios*) in the Bible usually, translated *Measure* = a little over a peck; (4) *Ephah* = 3 Seahs, or 10 Omers or about 3 pecks; (5) *Cor* = 10 Ephahs or 7½ bushels.

(*b*) *Liquid measure:* (1) *Auphauk* = 6 cubic inches, or .675 of a gill—this is not named in the Bible; (2) *Log* = four Auphauks, or a trifle more than half a pint; (3) *Hin* = 12 Logs, or a little over a gallon; (4) *Seah,* see above, twice as much as a Hin; (5) *Bath* = 3 Seahs, or 6 Hins, or a little over 6 gallons. Besides these the New Testament has two Greek measures: (1) *Metretes* = 10⅓ gallons; (2) *Choenix* = about a pint and a half.

(*c*) *Measures of length:* (1) *Atzbah* = a finger breadth, or two-thirds of an inch; (2) *Tupah* = 4 finger breadths, or 2⅔ inches; (3) *Zereth* = double the palm, or 5⅓ inches; (4) *Sit* = a span of 8 inches, the distance between the end of the thumb and the little finger of the outspread hand; (5) *Ameh* = a cubit or 16 inches; the cubit varies, however, from 15 to 21 inches.

(*d*) *Longer measures of length:* The cubit of 16 inches is here taken as the unit of measure: (1) *Fathom* = 6 or 6½ feet; (2) *Keneh* or *Reed,* 4 cubits, according to others 6 cubits, thus varying from 5⅓ to 8 feet; (3) *Stadium* or *Furlong* = 606 feet, or 53¼ feet less than our furlong; (4) *Mile* = 1618 yards. The Hebrew mile is not mentioned in the Bible, but was of two kinds: *Mil,* or small mile = 1000 cubits, or about a quarter of our mile; or the long mile, or twice this length; (5) *A Sabbath Day's Journey* = 2000 cubits, or half an English mile; other writers give it at about seven-eighths of our mile; (6) *The Day's Journey* varied from 9 to 30 miles, generally about 20.

(*e*) *Measures of weight:* (1) *Bekah* = about a quarter of an ounce; (2) *Siclus* = about half an ounce; (3) *Libra* = nearly twelve ounces; (4) *Mina* = two pounds and one ounce; (5) *Talent* = 102 pounds and 14 ounces.

Merom, a small lake in Palestine to the north of the Lake of Genesareth, traversed by the River Jordan.

Mesopotamia, a country of Asia lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates, between 600 and 700 miles long and 200 wide.

Miletus, city of Asia Minor on the Ægean Sea, a short distance from Africa. It was here that St. Paul pronounced the beautiful discourse recorded in the Acts (xx. 17 et seq.).

Mina, see *Money.* Weight.

Money:

(*a*) (1) *Gerah* = 2¾ cents; (2) *Bekah* = about 27⅓ cents; (3) *Shekel* = 54¾ cents; (4) *Maneh*, or *Mina* = 50 Shekels or $27.37½ cents; (5) *Talent of Silver* = $1642.50; (6) *Talent of Gold* = $26,280; (7) *A Shekel of Gold* weighing as much as a Shekel of Silver, was worth $8.75.

(*b*) *Greek and Roman Coins* chiefly referred to in the New Testament. (1) *Lepton* or *Mite* = a fifth of a cent; (2) *Quadrans* = two Mites or less than a half a cent; (3) *As* = less than a cent and a half; (4) *Assarion* (farthing) = four *Quadrans* or 1⅗ cents; (5) *Obolus* = less than 2½ cents; (6) *Denarius* = 16 cents; (7) *Drachma* = 17 cents; (8) *Stater, Siclus, Argenteus* or *Tetradrachma* about 66 cents.

Month. Among the Hebrews all months began with the new moon. In the beginning the months had no proper names; they were distinguished by the ordinal numbers, for example, the first, the second, and so on. Subsequently, that is, after the captivity of Babylon, the following names were given to them: *Nisan*, coinciding with parts of our months of March and April[1]; *Iyyar*, with parts of April and May; *Sivan*, with parts of May and June; *Thammuz*, with parts of June and July; *Ab*, with parts of July and August; *Eloul*, with parts of August and September; *Tisri*, with parts of September and October; *Marchesvan*, with parts of October and November; *Casleu*, with parts of November and December; *Tebet*, with parts of December and January; *Schebat*, with parts of January and February; *Adar*, with parts of February and March.

Mysia, a province of Asia Minor, of which Troy on the Ægean Sea is a port.

N

Naim, or *Nain*, a city of Galilee to the south of Nazareth, not far from Mount Thabor, celebrated for the miracle wrought there by Jesus Christ in restoring to life the only son of a widow (*Luke* vii. 11 et seq.). It still exists, but only as a miserable hamlet.

Nazareth, a city of Judea most dear to the memory of all Christians, for it was there that the Archangel Gabriel made the announcement to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God (*Luke* i. 26 et seq.). From the fact that Jesus Christ passed most of His life at Nazareth He was called a *Nazarene* (*Matt.* ii. 23). It is about eighty miles from Jerusalem.

[1]March 21–April 20.

Neomenia, see *Feasts.*

Nephthali, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, dwelling in the north of Palestine.

Night, the Hebrews divided the night into four parts, or watches, namely, *evening, midnight, cockcrow,* and *morning* (*Mark* xiii. 35).

O

Olivet, a hill at a short distance to the east of Jerusalem at the foot of which was Gethsemani. It was so called because of the olive orchards with which it was covered.

P

Pamphylia, a province of Asia Minor on the southern coast, evangelized by St. Paul and containing the cities of *Attalia* and *Perge* mentioned in the Acts (xiii. 13; xiv. 23).

Paphos, a port on the western shore of the island of Cyprus, where the proconsul Sergius Paulus was converted to the Christian faith (*Acts* xiii. 7).

Parasceve, or preparation, a name given by the Hebrews to the day before the Sabbath, since on this day they were obliged to prepare the food for the day following.

Parthians, people of Asia dwelling to the southeast of the Caspian Sea, among whom lived some Jews, as appears from *Acts* (ii. 9).

Pasch, see *Feasts.*

Patmos, an island in the Ægean Sea in the group Sporades (Turkish), celebrated as the place to which St. John was banished (*Apoc.* i. 9).

Pentecost, see *Feasts.*

Pharisees, or the *Separated,* a religious sect among the Jews, of very ancient origin and most hostile to the sect of Sadducees. They were extremely versed in Sacred Scripture and zealous and scrupulous observers of the Law of Moses and of the human traditions attached to it, which they made excessively burdensome. They were highly thought of by the

people, among whom they wielded great power. Most jealous of their national independence, they bore impatiently the yoke of strangers, especially since by their religious principles they could not intermingle with them. St. Paul belonged to this sect and in mentioning it he seems to glory in it. (*Philipp.* iii. 5).

A great many of the Pharisees were hypocrites; externally they scrupulously observed the Law, while at heart they were exceedingly corrupt, and hence were the objects of the sternest rebukes from Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philadelphia, a city of Asia Minor, in Lydia, not far from Sardus (*Apoc.* i. 11).

Philemon, a distinguished citizen of Colosse, to whom St. Paul, during his first captivity in Rome, wrote a very tactful and polite Letter in sending back to him Onesimus, a slave, who had run away from him and had been converted by the Apostle, while the latter was a prisoner in Rome.

Phenicia, a tract of country to the north of Palestine, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, of which *Tyre* and *Sidon* are the principal cities. These cities are mentioned in the Gospel narrative.

Philippi, a city of Macedonia, so called after Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. During his first imprisonment in Rome St. Paul wrote a very affectionate Letter to the Church of Philippi, the first he founded in Europe, from which (iii. 1) interpreters of name infer that he wrote another to the same Church which has not come down to us.

Pisidia, a mountainous province of Asia Minor toward the center. The discourse of St. Paul in the Synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia is given in the *Acts* (xiii. 14 et seq.).

Pontus, a province of Asia Minor, extending along the coast of Pontus Euxinus, the native country of Aquila (*Acts* xviii. 2). St. Peter wrote his two Letters to the Christians of this province.

Portico, or *Porch of Solomon,* a porch that stood at the eastern vestibule of the Temple, along the wall of the enclosure.

Publicans, collectors of the public revenue and taxes, a class heartily hated by the Jews, both because of the fraudulent exactions of which they were often guilty and because of their very office, which was a perpetual reminder to the Jews that they were under the dominion of foreign masters. to

whom they were forced to pay tribute. Hence they imputed it to Jesus Christ as a fault that He ate with publicans (*Matt.* ix. 11). St. Matthew had been one of this class (*Matt.* x. 3).

Phrygia, a western province of Asia Minor, twice traversed by St. Paul during his apostolic journeys (*Acts* xvi. 6; xviii. 23).

Phylacteries, strips of parchment or leather on which the Hebrews wrote certain precepts of the Law, or some other text, or Scripture maxim, and then bound them to the left arm or about the forehead. The Pharisees ostentatiously wore wider phylacteries than others and hence were severely reproved by Jesus Christ (*Matt.* xxiii. 5).

Q

Quadrans, see *Money.*

R

Rama, a small town of the tribe of Benjamin. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, was buried there.

Romans, St. Paul, about the year 59, when he intended passing through Rome on the journey he meditated making to Spain, wrote at Corinth a most important Letter to the Romans.

Ruben, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, who dwelt to the east of the Dead Sea.

S

Sabbath, a holy day and a day of rest among the Jews, on which every sort of labor was forbidden. The Pharisees carried this precept against labor so far and to such a superstitious excess that they regarded as a violation of the Sabbath the miraculous cures wrought by Jesus Christ. It was usual to designate the entire week by the name of Sabbath. Thus, "*Jejuno bis in Sabbato*" (*Luke* xviii. 12), equivalent to, "*I fast twice in a week;*" *Una Sabbatorum,* or *Prima Sabbati* (*Mark* xvi. 2-9), meaning the first day of the week, or our Sunday. As regards *Anno Sabbatico,* see *Year.*

Sadducees, a religious sect among the Jews, mostly composed of the rich and noble. They denied the existence of spirits and a future resurrection (*Acts* xxiii. 8), and, as was natural, lived as epicureans. Interpreters do not agree as to the origin of this sect.

Samaria, a province of Palestine to the northeast of Judea and to the west of the Jordan. The Jews and Samaritans were hostile to each other, and to call a Jew a *Samaritan* was the highest insult that could be offered him.

Samothracia, a small island in the Ægean Sea, not far from Thrace, where St. Paul stayed a day (*Acts* xvi. 11).

Sancta Sanctorum, that part of the Temple was so called in which was kept the Ark of the Covenant, containing the Tables of the Law, the Rod of Aaron, and the Vessel of Manna. It was entered but once a year by the high-priest, namely on the feast of *Expiation*, whereas the priests entered into the Holy Place every day (*Heb.* ix. 3 et seq.).

Sanhedrim, the tribunal or supreme court of the Jews, to which the most important cases were referred.

Scribes, the teachers of the people; they read and interpreted the Scriptures daily. They were chiefly Pharisees, with whom they are commonly associated in the Gospel narrative.

Sichar or *Sichem*, now Nablos, a city of Samaria, celebrated in the New Testament as the place of the conversion of the *Samaritan* woman, at the well of Jacob, which still exists.

Sidon, an important city of Phenicia, on the Mediterranean Sea (*Matt.* xi. 21).

Silas or *Silvanus*, a companion of St. Paul in his apostolic journey, of whom frequent mention is made in the *Acts*.

Simon Magus, a Samaritan and a magician, who bewitched and seduced the people, professing to be a great personage. Afterward he was converted by the preaching of Philip and baptized. His sacrilegious proposal to buy from the apostles with money the power of giving the Holy Spirit and St. Peter's severe reproof, are well known (*Acts* viii. 9 et seq.). The fact of his attempting to fly in Rome under Nero, in order to show his power, and of his fall at the prayer of St. Peter, is attested by many writers of authority, and by others called in question (see *Jungmann*, Dissertat, select. in H. E. vol. i).

Sosthenes, a companion and disciple of St. Paul (1 *Cor.* i. 1) concerning whom we have very little reliable information.

T

Tabernacles, Feast of, see *Feasts*.

Tarsus, a city of Asia Minor in Cilicia, best known for its having been the birthplace of St. Paul the Apostle.

Thabor, a mountain of Galilee to the southwest of the Lake of Genesareth, which, according to an ancient and common tradition, was the scene of Our Lord's transfiguration.

Thessalonica, now Saloniki, the chief and most flourishing city of Macedonia, a very important port of the Ægean Sea, on the Gulf of Salonica. The two Letters of St. Paul to the Christians of Thessalonica were the first in the order of time written by the great apostle. They were written at Corinth in the year 53 or 54.

Three Inns, or *Taverns*, the place to which some Christians of Rome went out to meet St. Paul (*Acts* xxviii. 15). It is on the Appian Road about seventeen miles to the south of Rome and near the modern Cisterna.

Tiberias, the capital of Galilee, situated on the western shore of the Lake of Tiberias or Genesareth. It was named after Tiberias.

Timothy, a disciple and most laborious co-worker with St. Paul and his almost inseparable companion, as we learn from the Acts and from the Apostle's Letters. He was a native of Lystra in Lycaonia. St. Paul wrote two Letters to this beloved disciple of his in which he gives him beautiful and very weighty instructions concerning the pastoral life.

Titus, another of St. Paul's faithful disciples and companions, concerning whom we possess very little information. The Letter written to him by St. Paul is short, but full of valuable and holy teaching.

Trachonitis, a country lying to the east of the Jordan and the Lake of Tiberias (*Luke* iii. 1).

Troas, or *Troy*, a port of Mysia on the Ægean Sea, where St. Paul had the vision in which he was called by God into Macedonia (*Acts* xvi. 8 et seq.).

Y

Year, the year of the Hebrews consisted of twelve lunar months, containing 354 days. From time to time a month was added to make the lunar year coincide with the solar. The *ecclesiastical* year, that by which the feasts were regulated, commenced with the month of *Nisan*, and the civil year with the month of *Tisri* (see *Month*).

Among the Hebrews every seventh year was a *Sabbatical Year*,

during which, by command of God, the tillers of the soil rested, the soil itself was left fallow, and everything spontaneously produced was the common property of all.

At periods of fifty years there was the *Jubilee Year*, during which, not only did the soil remain untilled, as during the *Sabbatical Year*, but all debts were extinguished, ground that had been sold reverted to its original owners, and slaves were set free.

Z

Zabulon, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, dwelling toward the north of Palestine. Nazareth was a city of this tribe.

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